

BELSHAZZAR COURT

Village Life in New York City



SIMEON STRUNSKY



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BELSHAZZAR COURT

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BELSHAZZAR COURT

OR

VILLAGE LIFE IN NEW YORK CITY

BY

SIMEON STRUNSKY



NEW YORK

HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY

1914

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Published October, 1914

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BELSHAZZAR COURT



I

IN BELSHAZZAR COURT

OUR apartment house has all-night elevator service. We have grown accustomed to being awakened in the middle of the night by the sound of violent hammering on the iron door of the elevator shaft, the object of which is to attract the attention of the operator, who is in the habit of running up his car to the top floor and going to sleep in the hall, being roused only with the greatest difficulty. Tenants have complained of the inconvenience; especially when one comes home late from an after-theater supper at a Broadway hotel. In deference to such complaints our elevator boys are constantly being discharged, but the tradition of going to sleep on the top floor seems to be continuous.

One of the reasons for this, I imagine, is that our landlord underpays his help and is consequently in no position to enforce discipline. However, I speak almost entirely on information and belief, my personal experience with the all-night

elevator having been confined to a single instance. That was when we came back from our vacation last summer at an early hour in the morning and rang the bell without eliciting any response. Inasmuch as we live only two flights up, we walked up the stairs, I carrying a suit-case, a hand-bag and the baby, and Emmeline carrying another suit-case and leading by the hand our boy Harold, who was fast asleep.

During the day our elevator is frequently out of order. The trouble, I believe, is with the brake, which every little while fails to catch, so that the car slides down a floor or two and sticks. It is quite probable that if our elevator boys remained long enough to become acquainted with the peculiar characteristics of the machinery in Belshazzar Court such stoppages would come less often. But no serious accidents have ever occurred, to my knowledge, and personally, as I have said, I suffer little inconvenience, since it is no trouble at all to walk up two flights of stairs.

But it is different with Emmeline, who worries over the children. She will not allow the baby to be taken into the car. Instead, she makes the nurse ride up or down with the go-cart, and has her fetch the baby by the stairs. Emmeline complains that in cold weather this

necessitates her own going downstairs to tuck the child into her cart, a duty which cannot possibly be delegated. It also exposes the baby to draughts while she is being taken out of the cart in the hall, preparatory to being carried upstairs. But Emmeline would rather take that chance than have the elevator drop with baby, as happened twice during the first week after we moved in. I have sometimes argued with her on the subject, maintaining that there cannot be any real danger when the safety of the elevator is guaranteed by no less than three casualty companies; but Emmeline says that is a detached point of view which she cannot share. Our boy Harold is under strict injunctions to walk. He finds it a deprivation, after having twice tasted the joy of being marooned between floors, whence he was rescued by means of a ladder.

It is on account of the large bedrooms that we selected this particular apartment house and cling to it in spite of certain obvious disadvantages. That is, there is really one bedroom only which can be called very large, but it has a fair amount of sunlight and it faces on an open court. Harold has the music-room, which landlords formerly used to call the back parlor. It faces on the avenue and makes an excellent sleeping-room and

play-room for the boy. Such rooms are almost impossible to find in a tolerable neighborhood for the really moderate rent we pay. That is, my rent is just a little more than I can afford; nevertheless you would think it reasonable if you saw what a fine appearance our apartment house makes. It has a façade in Flemish brick, with bay windows belted by handsome railings of wrought iron upon narrow stone balconies. It also has a mansard cornice painted a dull green, which is visible several blocks away over the roofs of the old-fashioned flats by which our house is surrounded.

Our friends, when they come to see us for the first time, are impressed with Belshazzar Court. You pass through heavy grilled doors into a marble-lined vestibule which is separated by a second pair of massive doors from the spacious main hall. This hall is gay with an astonishingly large number of handsome electroliers in imitation cut glass. There is also a magnificent marble fireplace in which the effect of a wood fire is simulated by electric bulbs under a sheet of red-colored isinglass. The heat is furnished by a steam radiator close by. The floor has two large Oriental rugs of domestic manufacture. There is a big leather couch in front of the fireplace. Everywhere are large, comfortable, arm-chairs in

which I have often thought it would be pleasant to lounge and smoke, but I have never had the time. On a mahogany table, in the center, the day's mail is displayed. I have sometimes glanced over the letters in idle curiosity and found that they consist largely of circulars from clothing firms and dyeing establishments. The chandeliers usually have a number of the crystal prisms broken or missing. The rugs are fairly worn, but doubtless the casual visitor does not notice that. The general effect of our main hall is, as I have said, imposing. Sunday afternoons there are several motor-cars lined up in front of the house.

The number of young children in our apartment house is not large, a dozen or fifteen, perhaps. The house has six stories and there are nine apartments to the floor, so you can figure out for yourself the rate of increase for the population of Belshazzar Court. My own contribution to the infant statistics of our apartment house is apparently between one-sixth and one-eighth of the total number. Moreover, if you calculate not by mere number but by the amount of vital energy liberated, my own share is still larger. For there is no denying the justice of the hall boys' complaint that our Harold creates more disturbance in the house than any other three children. The

missing prisms in the hall chandeliers are in considerable degree to be attributed to Harold. Not that he has a predilection for electroliers. He is just as hard on shoes and stockings. The former he destroys in a peculiar manner. As he walks upstairs, he carefully adjusts the upper of his shoe, just over the arch, to the edge of each step, and scrapes toward the toe slowly but firmly. When in good form he can shave the toes from a new pair of shoes in a single afternoon, and I have known him to reduce his footgear, within a week, to a semblance of degraded destitution that is the despair and mortification of his mother.

However, it must not be supposed that Harold is unpopular with the working staff of Belshazzar Court. The only apparent exception is the house superintendent, who is held responsible for all damage accruing to halls and stairways. His point of view is therefore quite comprehensible. But even the bitter protests of the house superintendent are not, I imagine, a true index to his permanent state of feeling with regard to Harold. At least I know that after the superintendent has called up Emmeline on the telephone to complain of Harold's fondness for tracing patterns on the mahogany hall table with a wire nail, the boy has been found in the cellar watching the stoking of

the furnace with bated breath, a privilege conferred on but few. The superintendent has also given Harold the run of a great pile of cinders and ashes which occasionally accumulates near the furnace doors. From such excursions the boy returns with the knees of his stockings entirely gone, and only the blue of his eyes discernible through a layer of coal dust which lends him an aspect of extraordinary ferocity.

And yet I believe it is Harold's clamorous career through life that is the secret of his popularity with the people in our house. When he walks down the stairs it sounds like a catastrophe. He engages in furious wrestling bouts with the hall boys, whose life he threatens to take in the most fiendishly cruel manner. His ability to "lick" the elevator boy and the telephone operator single-handed is an open secret to anyone who has ever met Harold. But as I have said, there are very few children in the house, and I imagine that the sound of him engaging in mortal combat with the elevator boy and the clatter of his progress down the stairs echo rather gratefully at times through the long, somber hallways.

I am an eyewitness of Harold's popularity on Sunday mornings when Emmeline and I, with both

the children, ride down in the elevator for our weekly stroll along the Boulevard. My bodily presence on Sunday so far removes my wife's apprehensions with regard to the elevator that she will consent to take the baby down in the car. On such occasions I have observed that our neighbors invariably smile at Harold. Sometimes they will ask him how soon and in just what way he intends to destroy the new hall boy, or they will reach out a hand and pluck at his ear. The women in the car content themselves with smiling at him.

Harold's friends, who thus salute him on Sunday morning, usually carry or lead a small dog or two which they are taking out for the daily exercise. There are a large number of small dogs in our apartment house. I don't pretend to know the different breeds, but they are nearly all of them winsome little beasts, with long, silky pelts, retroussé noses, and eyes that blink fiercely at you. Their masters are as a rule big, thick-set men, well advanced toward middle age, faultlessly dressed, and shaven to the quick. Or else the small dogs repose in the arms of tall, heavy women, who go mercilessly corseted and pay full tribute to modern requirements in facial decoration. They seem to lay great store by their pets, but

they also find a kind glance for Harold. Sometimes I imagine it is a different glance which they turn from their little dogs to Harold—a softer look, with the suggestion of wonder in it. From Harold and the baby they usually glance at Emmeline. I pass virtually unnoticed.

I have mentioned the baby. When she is with us, Harold does not monopolize our neighbors' attention. It would be odd if it were otherwise. I am not so partisan as Emmeline in this matter, but I am inclined to think she is right when she says that our baby's eyes, of a liquid grayish-blue, staring in fascination out of the soft, pink swell of her cheeks, cannot help going straight to the heart of every normally constituted bystander. The women with small dogs in their arms smile at Harold, but they will bend down to the baby and hold out a finger to her and ask her name. Under such circumstances the behavior of Emmeline is rather difficult to explain. She is proud and resentful at the same time. Her moral judgments are apt to be swift and sharp, and when we are alone she has often characterized these neighbors of ours—the women, I mean—in pretty definite terms. Her opinion of women whose interests are satisfied by a husband and a toy dog would please Mr. Roosevelt, I imagine. Yet she

never fails to tell me of the extraordinary charm our baby exerts on these very people whose outlook upon life and æsthetic standards she thoroughly despises.

I have a confession to make. Sometimes, during our encounters in the elevator with our close-shaven, frock-coated neighbors and their fashionably dressed wives, I have looked at Emmeline's clothes and made comparisons not to her discredit but to my own. I should like Emmeline to cut as fine a figure as her neighbors, occasionally. Our neighbors' wives on a Sunday are dazzling in velvets and furs and plumes, whereas Emmeline has a natural disinclination for ostrich feathers even if we could afford to go in for such things. Her furs are not bad, but they are not new. They have worn well during the four years she has had them; nevertheless they are not new.

I am not hinting at shabbiness. That is the last thing you would think of if you saw Emmeline. An exquisite cleanliness of figure, a fine animation in the eyes and the cut of her lips, an electric youthfulness of gesture—I know that clothes are vanity, but sometimes, on Sundays, I am seized with an extraordinary desire for velvets and feathers and furs. I feel that there must be a certain, spiritual tonic in the knowledge of being

splendidly overdressed. It is a plunge into outlawry which has its temptations to quiet people like myself who would never dare to put on a red tie. I sometimes wonder if the ancient Greeks, with all their inborn taste for simplicity in line and color, did not occasionally go in for a sartorial spree. I really do not regret the fact that I cannot afford to give Emmeline a sealskin coat and a hat with aigrettes. Ninety-nine times out of a hundred I should feel uneasy to see her thus arrayed. But occasionally, yes, occasionally, I should like it.

Frequently I catch myself wondering how the others can afford it. I take it that even when you make due allowance for the New York temperament it is fairly safe to assume that people living in the same apartment house occupy the same economic level. There are exceptions, of course. Tucked away in some rear-court apartment you will find people whose bank accounts would amaze their neighbors. But these are precisely the ones who make the least display. They are maiden ladies of native American descent and the last of their line; or the widows of Tammany contractors and office-holders who divide their time between works of piety and a cat; or prolific German families of the second generation living

after the sober traditions of the race. Still, I feel sure that the majority of our neighbors in Belshazzar Court are in the same income class with myself. How, then, can they afford it all—velvets, furs, the Sunday afternoon motor-car in front of the door? I put aside the obvious explanation, that there are no children. That would make a very considerable difference, but still—motor-cars, bridge three times a week for very considerable stakes, tables reserved at Shanley's for Election night and New Year's Eve—

"They *have* to afford it," says Emmeline, with that incisive justice of hers in which I should sometimes like to see a deeper tincture of mercy. "When you come to think of it, a little pink-nosed dog cannot fill up a woman's life. There must be other interests."

"In other words," I said, "they can't afford it. Do these people pay their bills?"

We used to call this a rhetorical question at college. My information on the subject is probably as good as Emmeline's. Five minutes of pleasant gossip with one's newsdealer is illuminating. Not that I am given to hanging over shop-counters, or that my newsdealer would be reckless enough to mention names. But since we are by way of being in the same line of business, I writing

for the newspapers while he sells them,—and incidentally makes the better income of the two,—we do pass the time of day whenever I drop in for cigars or stationery. On such occasions, without quoting names, he will state it as a regrettable economic puzzle that so many people who ride in motor-cars should find it hard to pay their newspaper bills. There was one account, running up to something over eight dollars, he told me, that he was finally compelled to write down to profit and loss. The figures are instructive. Eleven cents a week—for it is an odd fact that people who ride in motor-cars read only the penny papers—makes forty-four cents a month. Throw in an occasional ten-cent magazine and you have a total expenditure of say seventy or eighty cents a month. An unpaid newspaper bill of eight dollars would therefore argue a condition of acute financial embarrassment extending over a period of nearly a year.

My newsdealer's explanation was that garage bills must be paid with fair promptness and dinners at Shanley's must be paid for in cash, seeing that the demand is always greater than the supply. Whereas the competition among newsdealers is so sharp, and literature is on the whole a luxury so easily dispensed with, that the news vendor

must be content to wait for his bill or lose his customer. And he went on to say that there is serious talk among men in his line of business of organizing a newsdealers' benevolent and protective association for the enforcement of collections from customers living in elevator apartments.

"And then again," says Emmeline, "why shouldn't they be able to afford it? They don't eat."

She goes on to show that inevitably a house with no children in it is a house with very little good food in it. Emmeline has made a study of eugenics, and she has come to the conclusion that the purest milk and a lot of it, the juiciest steaks, and the freshest vegetables constitute the best preventive of a neurotic citizenship in the future. It is a principle which she lives up to so resolutely that our food bills would strike many people as staggering. Now appetite, Emmeline argues, is very susceptible to suggestion. People learn to eat by watching their young. It's like caviare. But where there are no children life may easily be sustained on soda crackers and a glass of milk.

And it is something more than that. (I am still paraphrasing Emmeline's views.) A dining-room table with children's eager, hungry faces

around it ceases to be a mere dining-room table and becomes an altar. Dinner is not a mere replenishing of the physiological furnaces; it partakes of the nature of a sacrament, with the mother as the high priestess, and the father,—well, let us call him the tithe-gatherer. Eating in common is a form of primitive nature-worship which the purest religions have taken over and sanctified. To break bread together—well, all this is quite obvious. But now try to think of a sacrament as being administered with a can-opener and a chafing-dish.

“That is what they live on,” says Emmeline, “things that come out of tins and paper boxes. At the end of a year it means a fur coat.” Which isn’t really very convincing. A single after-theater supper on Broadway will easily swallow up a week’s frying-pan economies. But as an index of the attitude of those women who cook for their children to those women who have no children to cook for, Emmeline’s opinion has its value. I admit that, being a woman, she is prejudiced, my own prejudices being to a very great extent the reflection of hers.

Emmeline has a hatred for gossip that is quite extraordinary in one who is so closely confined to her home by household duties. Hence you will

wonder where she obtains her information, sometimes so startlingly intimate, regarding our neighbors' habits. Well, in the first place, Belshazzar Court is very much like those Russian prisons you read about, which hum and echo with news flashing along mysterious channels. The prison walls resound to ghostly taps in the still of the night. The water-pipes beat out their message. A handkerchief is waved at a window. A convict's shackled feet, dragging along the corridor, send out the Morse code of the cell. So it requires no special gift of imagination to sit in one's apartment and reconstruct the main outlines of the life about you. The mechanical piano downstairs has its say. There is a scamper of young feet in the hallway above. A voice of exasperation rasps its way down the dumb-waiter. A sewing machine whirs its short half hour and is silent. Little yelping volleys announce meal-time for the silken-haired Pekinese. As night comes on, the lights begin to flash up, revealing momentary silhouettes, groups, bits of still life. The alarm clock in the morning and the heavy, thoughtful tread at midnight bespeak different habits and occupations. It is a world built up out of sounds.

There are the servants. They are the telegraph wires of apartment-house life. Like a good many

telegraph wires in the great world outside, they are sadly overburdened with trivialities. Yet a healthy cook or nursemaid will pick up during a ten minutes' excursion to the roof an amazing mass of miscellaneous information. This information she insists upon imparting to you. At first Emmeline would refuse to listen, protesting that she did not care to be burdened with other people's affairs. But we soon learned that the one form of class-distinction which domestic help will not tolerate is a refusal to meet them on the common level of gossip. What makes the problem all the more difficult is that as a rule the best servants have the keenest appetite for petty scandal. Presumably a robust interest in one's own duties goes hand in hand with a healthy interest in the way other people are living up to their duty. Elizabeth, the only cook we have ever had who will not create a scene when somebody drops in unexpectedly for dinner, simply oozes information. When I think of the secrets into which Elizabeth has initiated us with regard to our neighbors whom we have never met, I feel an embarrassment which is only relieved by the thought that these neighbors must be quite as well informed about ourselves.

Perhaps I should know more of our neighbors

if the electric lights in our stately hallways did not burn so dimly. I have mentioned the handsome glass chandeliers in our main hall and vestibule. Unfortunately they give forth a faint, sepulchral light. Our elevator car, a massive cage of iron and copper, is quite dark. It may be that our landlord has artistic leanings and is trying to impart a subdued, studio atmosphere to his halls; very dim illumination being, I understand, the proper thing in advanced circles. Incidentally there must be a saving in electricity bills. At any rate, if you will take into consideration the fact that I have a habit of staring at people, even in broad daylight, without recognizing them, and if you will add to that the fact that a day's fussing over proofs and exchanges in the office is followed by an hour in the Subway over the evening papers, it is quite plain why I have difficulty in remembering the faces of neighbors whom I occasionally run across.

Most of the neighbors are very much the same way. An hour in the dead atmosphere of the Subway wilts the social virtues out of a man. We manage to make our way listlessly into the upper air. We trudge wearily through the handsome iron doors of our apartment house. We take our places in opposite corners of the elevator car and

stare up at the roof of the cage or count the floors as we pass. Three or four of us leave at the same floor and go our several ways, I to number 43 on the right, one man to number 42 straight ahead, one to the left, and so forth. As I have said, there are nine apartments to the floor.

Emmeline insists that I should not read in the Subway. She says I ought to lean back and close my eyes and rest. But she forgets that the man you lean back upon is sure to protest. Lateral pressure enforces an attitude of extreme rigidity during the rush hour, and to stand up straight with one's eyes closed tight is obviously ridiculous. Even when I find a seat, I do not like to close my eyes. It gives people the impression that I am pretending to be asleep in order to avoid giving up my seat to a woman, and on that subject I have the courage of my convictions. An hour in the Subway can be made endurable only by some such narcotic as the evening papers afford; and when you have read through three or four papers, your eyes naturally show the strain.

Of course, if we stay long enough in Belshazzar Court, we shall make acquaintances. Accident will bring that about. For instance, there are a number of men in my line of work and the allied professions who meet every now and then in a

little German café on the East side in the 'Eighties. It is not a club, since there are neither members nor by-laws nor initiation fees, nor, worst of all abominations, a set subject for papers and discussion. People simply drift in and out. We keep late hours, and it is a well-known fact that in the early hours of the morning friendships are rather easily formed. That was the way I met Brewster.

Brewster (I don't know his first name) is a tall, thin, sallow-faced man of thirty-five who looks the Middle West he comes from. I had seen him at two of our meetings before we fell into talk. He spoke sparingly, not because he was shy, but because as a rule he had trouble in finding the right phrase. It was not until we were walking across town toward the Subway one night that I found out that Brewster is associate professor of mathematics at my old university. But he has ideas outside of Euclid. He is a Radical, he detests New York, and he is looking forward to the time when he can get away. But I imagine that he is not looking forward very eagerly. Your Radical loves the city while he curses it. At any rate, the Subway trains make speed at night and I was at my station before I knew it. Had he passed his own? No, it appeared that this was

his station, too. That was pleasant, I said. Living in the same neighborhood I hoped we would see more of each other in the future. He said it would be pleasant indeed; his own address was Belshazzar Court. He had been there more than two years now. He lived on the third floor, in 47.

"That would be directly across the court from 43?"

He thought it was.

That was two weeks ago. We have not yet found the time to drop in on Brewster. But sometimes I catch a glimpse of him through the window-curtains of his dining-room. Of course I had seen his figure pass across the window before, but naturally had never looked long enough to fix his face in my memory. He has his two children and his unmarried sister in the apartment with him. The mother of the children is dead. The elder is a boy of seven, and I think he must be the pleasant-faced lad who on several occasions has rung our bell and complained that our Harold has robbed him of various bits of personal property—a toy pistol, a clay pipe, and several college emblems of the kind that come in cigarette boxes.

That is all I know of Brewster directly. Emeline knows a little more. She has it from our

cook, who has it from Brewster's cook. He goes out very rarely. In the morning he escorts the little boy to a private school half a mile away. This he does on his way to the university. He comes home a little earlier than I do, usually with a grip full of books. Our cook says that Brewster is invariably present when his sister gives the little girl her bath before putting her to bed; the child is only two years old. The boy has his supper with his father and aunt, and it is Brewster himself who superintends his going to bed. This process is extremely involved and is marked by a great deal of rough-and-tumble hilarity. Late at night, as I sit reading or writing, I catch a glimpse of him over his work at the big dining-room table, correcting examination papers, I suppose, though I believe he does some actuarial work for an insurance company. He will get up occasionally for a turn or two about the room, or to fill his pipe, or to fetch from the kitchen a cup of tea which he drinks cold. I see him at work long after midnight.

Have I gone into all this detail concerning Brewster merely because he happens to live in 47, which is just across the court from 43, or because our habits and our interests really do touch at so many points? If Brewster were writing

down his impressions of Belshazzar Court at midnight, with myself as the central figure, his story would be very much like mine. A glimpse into the windows of our dining-room would show me, too, in a clutter of papers, rustling through my exchange clippings, dipping into a volume of "Pickwick" for a moment's rest, striking innumerable matches to keep a reluctant pipe a-going, and drinking cold tea,—too much cold tea, I am afraid.

Yes, Brewster and I have something in common. But then I wonder, if I were living one floor above, in 53, and chance had made me acquainted with Smith who lives across the court in 57, would Smith and I discover that there are human ties between us other than our dependence on the same central heating plant? For one thing, I know that the Smiths have a baby which frequently cries at night in unison with our own. Sometimes the Smith baby wakes up ours. Sometimes the initiative comes from our own side.

Because I drink so much cold tea before going to bed, I find it difficult to fall asleep. I lie awake and think of Belshazzar Court with a fondness that I cannot muster at any other time. The house offers me an extraordinary sense of security; not for myself, but for those who belong

to me. It is a comfort to have one's wife and children snugly tucked away in one's own particular cluster of cells at the end of one's own obscure little passageway, where an enemy would need Ariadne's guiding thread to find them. The cave man must have felt some such satisfaction when he had stored his young and their mother into some peculiarly inaccessible rock cleft.

I suppose the dark is a favorable time for the recurrence of such primordial feelings. In the dark the need for human fellowship wells up to the surface. Athwart the partitions of lath and mortar, we of Belshazzar Court experience the warm, protective sensation which comes from huddling together against the invisible menaces of the night.

Decidedly, I must give up drinking so much cold tea. My eyes to-morrow will show the strain. But it is wonderful, too, this lying awake and feeling that you can almost catch the heart-throb of hundreds, above you, below you, on both sides. My neighbors undergo a magic transformation. Deprived of individuality,—viewed, so to speak, under their eternal aspect,—they grow lovable. Belshazzar's Court is transformed. In the day it is a barracks. At night it becomes a walled refuge, a tabernacle almost. The pulse of life

beats through its halls with just enough momentum to make a solemn music which gradually overcomes the effects of the cold tea. Intermittent noises twist themselves into vague fugues and arabesques. Somewhere on the floor above, heavy footsteps go back and forth in leisurely preparation for bed. Somewhere across the court, people have returned from the theater. Evidently they are still under the exhilaration of the lights and the crowd. They pass judgment on the play and their voices are thoughtlessly fresh and animated, considering how late it is; but somehow you are not disturbed. With utter lack of interest you hear a child's wail break out—it is the Smith baby—and you hear the mother's "hush, hush," falling into a somnolent, crooning chant. Outside, a motor-car starts into life with a grinding and a whir and a sputter, and you set yourself to follow its receding hum, which becomes a drone and then a murmur and then silence, but you are not sure whether it is yet silence. As you are still wondering there comes the end of things, except that now and then you stir to the clamor of the elevator bell, ringing indignantly for the boy who has run the car up to the top floor and gone to sleep in the hall.

II

THE STREET

It is two short blocks from my office near Park Row to the Subway station where I take the express for Belshazzar Court. Eight months in the year it is my endeavor to traverse this distance as quickly as I can. This is done by cutting diagonally across the street traffic. By virtue of the law governing right-angled triangles I thus save as much as fifty feet and one-fifth of a minute of time. In the course of a year this saving amounts to sixty minutes, which may be profitably spent over a two-reel presentation of "The Moonshiner's Bride," supplemented by an intimate picture of Lumbering in Saskatchewan.

But with the coming of warm weather my habits change. It grows difficult to plunge into the murk of the Subway. A foretaste of June is in the air. The turnstile storm-doors in our office building, which have been put aside for brief periods during the first deceptive approaches of spring, only to come back triumphant from Elba,

have been definitely removed. The steel-workers pace their girders twenty floors high almost in mid-season form, and their pneumatic hammers scold and chatter through the sultry hours. The soda fountains are bright with new compounds whose names ingeniously reflect the world's progress from day to day in politics, science, and the arts. From my window I can see the long black steamships pushing down to the sea, and they raise vague speculations in my mind about the cost of living in the vicinity of Sorrento and Fontainebleau. On such a day I am reminded of my physician's orders, issued last December, to walk a mile every afternoon on leaving my office. So I stroll up Broadway with the intention of taking my train farther uptown, at Fourteenth Street.

The doctor did not say stroll. He said a brisk walk with head erect, chest thrown out, diaphragm well contracted, and a general aspect of money in the bank. But here enters human perversity. The only place where I am in the mood to walk after the prescribed military fashion is in the open country. Just where by all accounts I ought to be sauntering without heed to time, studying the lovely texts which Nature has set down in the modest type-forms selected from her inexhaustible fonts,—in the minion of ripening berries,

in the nonpareil of crawling insect life, the agate of tendril and filament, and the 12-point diamond of the dust,—there I stride along with my own thoughts and see little.

And in the city, where I should swing along briskly, I lounge. What is there on Broadway to linger over? On Broadway, Nature has used her biggest, fattest type-forms. Tall, flat, building fronts, brazen with many windows and ribbed with commercial gilt lettering six feet high; shrieking proclamations of auction sales written in letters of fire on vast canvasses; railway posters in scarlet and blue and green; rotatory barber-poles striving at the national colors and producing vertigo; banners, escutcheons, crests, in all the primary colors—surely none of these things needs poring over. And I know them with my eyes closed. I know the windows where lithe youths in gymnasium dress demonstrate the virtue of home exercises; the windows where other young men do nothing but put on and take off patent reversible near-linen collars; where young women deftly roll cigarettes; where other young women whittle at sticks with miraculously stropped razors. I know these things by heart, yet I linger over them in flagrantly unhygienic attitudes, my shoulders bent forward and my chest and diaphragm in a posi-

tion precisely the reverse of that prescribed by the doctor.

Perhaps the thing that makes me linger before these familiar sights is the odd circumstance that in Broadway's shop-windows Nature is almost never herself, but is either supernatural or artificial. Nature, for instance, never intended that razors should cut wood and remain sharp; that linen collars should keep on getting cleaner the longer they are worn; that glass should not break; that ink should not stain; that gauze should not tear; that an object worth five dollars should sell for \$1.39; but all these things happen in Broadway windows. Williams, whom I meet now and then, who sometimes turns and walks up with me to Fourteenth Street, pointed out to me the other day how strange a thing it is that the one street which has become a synonym for "real life" to all good suburban Americans is not real at all, but is crowded either with miracles or with imitations.

The windows on Broadway glow with wax fruits and with flowers of muslin and taffeta drawn by bounteous Nature from her storehouses in Parisian garret workshops. Broadway's ostrich feathers have been plucked in East side tenements. The huge cigars in the tobacconist's windows are

of wood. The enormous bottles of champagne in the saloons are of cardboard, and empty. The tall scaffoldings of proprietary medicine bottles in the drug shops are of paper. "Why," said Williams, "even the jewelry sold in the Japanese auction stores is not genuine, and the auctioneers are not Japanese."

This bustling mart of commerce, as the generation after the Civil War used to say, is only a world of illusion. Artificial flowers, artificial fruits, artificial limbs, tobacco, rubber, silks, woolens, straws, gold, silver. The young men and women who manipulate razors and elastic cords are real, but not always. Williams and I once stood for a long while and gazed at a young woman posing in a drug-shop window, and argued whether she was alive. Ultimately she winked and Williams gloated over me. But how do I know her wink was real? At any rate, the great mass of human life in the windows is artificial. The ladies who smile out of charming morning costumes are obviously of lining and plaster. Their smug Herculean husbands in pajamas preserve their equanimity in the severest winter weather only because of their wire-and-plaster constitution. The baby reposing in its beribboned crib is china and excelsior. Illusion everywhere.

But the Broadway crowd is real. You only have to buffet it for five minutes to feel, in eyes and arms and shoulders, how real it is. When I was a boy and was taken to the circus it was always an amazing thing to me that there should be so many people in the street moving in a direction away from the circus. Something of this sensation still besets me whenever we go down in the Subway from Belshazzar Court to hear Caruso. The presence of all the other people on our train is simple enough. They are all on their way to hear Caruso. But what of the crowds in the trains that flash by in the opposite direction? It is not a question of feeling sorry for them. I try to understand and I fail. But on Broadway on a late summer afternoon the obverse is true. The natural thing is that the living tide as it presses south shall beat me back, halt me, eddy around me. I know that there are people moving north with me, but I am not acutely aware of them. This onrush of faces converges on me alone. It is I against half the world.

And then suddenly out of the surge of faces one leaps out at me. It is Williams, whose doctor has told him that the surest way of fighting down the lust for tobacco is to walk down from his office to the ferry every afternoon. Williams and I

salute each other after the fashion of Broadway, which is to exchange greetings backward over the shoulder. This is the first step in an elaborate minuet. Because we have passed each other before recognition came, our hands fly out backward. Now we whirl half around, so that I who have been moving north face the west, while Williams, who has been traveling south, now looks east. Our clasped hands strain at each other as we stand there poised for flight after the first greeting. A quarter of a minute perhaps, and we have said good-by.

But if the critical quarter of a minute passes, there ensues a change of geographical position which corresponds to a change of soul within us. I suddenly say to myself that there are plenty of trains to be had at Fourteenth Street. Williams recalls that another boat will leave Battery Place shortly after the one he is bound for. So the tension of our outstretched arms relaxes. I, who have been facing west, complete the half circle and swing south. Williams veers due north, and we two men stand face to face. The beat and clamor of the crowd fall away from us like a well-trained stage mob. We are in Broadway, but not of it.

“Well, what’s the good word?” says Williams.

When two men meet on Broadway the spirit of

optimism strikes fire. We begin by asking each other what the good word is. We take it for granted that neither of us has anything but a chronicle of victory and courage to relate. What other word but the good word is tolerable in the lexicon of living, upstanding men? Failure is only for the dead. Surrender is for the man with yellow in his nature. So Williams and I pay our acknowledgments to this best of possible worlds. I give Williams the good word. I make no allusion to the fact that I have spent a miserable night in communion with neuralgia; how can that possibly concern him? Another manuscript came back this morning from an editor who regretted that his is the most unintelligent body of readers in the country. The third cook in three weeks left us last night after making vigorous reflections on my wife's good nature and my own appearance. Only an hour ago, as I was watching the long, black steamers bound for Sorrento and Fontainebleau, the monotony of one's treadmill work, the flat unprofitableness of scribbling endlessly on sheets of paper, had become almost a nausea. But Williams will know nothing of this from me. Why should he? He may have been sitting up all night with a sick child. At this very moment the thought of the little parched lips, the moan, the unseeing

eyes, may be tearing at his entrails; but he in turn gives me the good word, and many others after that, and we pass on.

But sometimes I doubt. This splendid optimism of people on Broadway, in the Subway, and in the shops and offices—is it really a sign of high spiritual courage, or is it just lack of sensibility? Do we find it easy to keep a stiff upper lip, to buck up, to never say die, because we are brave men, or simply because we lack the sensitiveness and the imagination to react to pain? It may be even worse than that. It may be part of our commercial gift for window-dressing, for putting up a good front.

Sometimes I feel that Williams has no right to be walking down Broadway on business when there is a stricken child at home. The world cannot possibly need him at that moment as much as his own flesh and blood does. It is not courage; it is brutish indifference. At such times I am tempted to dismiss as mythical all this fine talk about feelings that run deep beneath the surface, and bruised hearts that ache under the smile. If a man really suffers he will show it. If a man cultivates the habit of not showing emotion he will end by having none to show. How much of Broadway's optimism is—But here I am para-

phrasing William James's *Principles of Psychology*, which the reader can just as well consult for himself in the latest revised edition of 1907.

Also, I am exaggerating. Most likely Williams's children are all in perfect health, and my envelope from the editor has brought a check instead of a rejection slip. It is on such occasions that Williams and I, after shaking hands the way a locomotive takes on water on the run, wheel around, halt, and proceed to buy something at the rate of two for a quarter. If anyone is ever inclined to doubt the spirit of American fraternity, it is only necessary to recall the number of commodities for men that sell two for twenty-five cents. In theory, the two cigars which Williams and I buy for twenty-five cents are worth fifteen cents apiece. As a matter of fact, they are probably ten-cent cigars. But the shopkeeper is welcome to his extra nickel. It is a small price to pay for the seal of comradeship that stamps his pair of cigars selling for a single quarter. Two men who have concluded a business deal in which each has commendably tried to get the better of the other may call for twenty-five cent perfectos or for half-dollar Dreadnoughts. I understand there are such. But friends sitting down together will always demand cigars that go for a round sum,

two for a quarter or three for fifty (if the editor's check is what it ought to be).

When people speak of the want of real comradeship among women, I sometimes wonder if one of the reasons may not be that the prices which women are accustomed to pay are individualistic instead of fraternal. The soda fountains and the street cars do not dispense goods at the rate of two items for a single coin. It is infinitely worse in the department stores. Treating a friend to something that costs \$2.79 is inconceivable. But I have really wandered from my point.

"Well, be good," says Williams, and rushes off to catch his boat.

The point I wish to make is that on Broadway people pay tribute to the principle of goodness that rules this world, both in the way they greet and in the way they part. We salute by asking each other what the good word is. When we say good-by we enjoin each other to be good. The humorous assumption is that gay devils like Williams and me need to be constantly warned against straying off into the primrose paths that run out of Broadway.

Simple, humorous, average American man! You have left your suburban couch in time to walk half a mile to the station and catch the 7.59 for

the city. You have read your morning paper; discussed the weather, the Kaiser, and the prospects for lettuce with your neighbor; and made the office only a minute late. You have been fastened to your desk from nine o'clock to five, with half an hour for lunch, which you have eaten in a clamorous, overheated restaurant while you watched your hat and coat. At odd moments during the day the thought of doctor's bills, rent bills, school bills, has insisted on receiving attention. At the end of the day, laden with parcels from the market, from the hardware store, from the seedman, you are bound for the ferry to catch the 5.43, when you meet Smith, who, having passed the good word, sends you on your way with the injunction to be good—not to play roulette, not to open wine, not to turkey-trot, not to joy-ride, not to haunt the stage door. Be good, O simple, humorous, average suburban American!

I take back that word suburban. The Sunday Supplement has given it a meaning which is not mine. I am speaking only of the suburban in spirit, of a simplicity, a meekness which is of the soul only. Outwardly there is nothing suburban about the crowd on lower Broadway. The man in the street is not at all the diminutive, apologetic creature with side whiskers whom Mr. F. B. Oppen-

brought forth and named Common People, who begat the Strap-Hanger, who begat the Rent-Payer and the Ultimate Consumer. The crowd on lower Broadway is alert and well set up. Yes, though one hates to do it, I must say "clean-cut." The men on the sidewalk are young, limber, sharp-faced, almost insolent young men. There are not very many old men in the crowd, though I see any number of gray-haired young men. Seldom do you detect the traditional signs of age, the sagging lines of the face, the relaxed abdominal contour, the tamed spirit. The young, the young-old, the old-young, but rarely quite the old.

I am speaking only of externals. Clean-cut, eager faces are very frequently disappointing. A very ordinary mind may be working behind that clear sweep of brow and nose and chin. I have known the shock of young men who look like kings of Wall Street and speak like shoe clerks. They are shoe clerks. But the appearance is there, that athletic carriage which is helped out by our triumphant, ready-made clothing. I suppose I ought to detest the tailor's tricks which iron out all ages and all stations into a uniformity of padded shoulders and trim waist-lines and hips. I imagine I ought to despise our habit of wearing elegant shoddy where the European chooses honest,

clumsy woollens. But I am concerned only with externals, and in outward appearances a Broadway crowd beats the world. Æsthetically we simply are in a class by ourselves when compared with the Englishman and the Teuton in their skimpy, ill-cut garments. Let the British and German ambassadors at Washington do their worst. This is my firm belief and I will maintain it against the world. The truth must out. *Ruat cælum. Ich kann nicht anders. J'y suis, j'y reste.*

Williams laughs at my lyrical outbursts. But I am not yet through. I still have to speak of the women in the crowd. What an infinitely finer thing is a woman than a man of her class! To see this for yourself you have only to walk up Broadway until the southward-bearing stream breaks off and the tide begins to run from west to east. You have passed out of the commercial district into the region of factories. It is well on toward dark, and the barracks that go by the unlovely name of loft buildings, are pouring out their battalions of needle-workers. The crowd has become a mass. The nervous pace of lower Broadway slackens to the steady, patient tramp of a host. It is an army of women, with here and there a flying detachment of the male.

On the faces of the men the day's toil has writ-

ten its record even as on the woman, but in a much coarser hand. Fatigue has beaten down the soul of these men into brutish indifference. But in the women it has drawn fine the flesh only to make it more eloquent of the soul. Instead of listlessness, there is wistfulness. Instead of vacuity you read mystery. Innate grace rises above the vulgarity of the dress. Cheap, tawdry blouse and imitation willow-plume walk shoulder to shoulder with the shoddy coat of the male, copying Fifth Avenue as fifty cents may attain to five dollars. But the men's shoddy is merely a horror, whereas woman transfigures and subtilizes the cheap material. The spirit of grace which is the birthright of her sex cannot be killed—not even by the presence of her best young man in Sunday clothes. She is finer by the heritage of her sex, and America has accentuated her title. This America which drains her youthful vigor with overwork, which takes from her cheeks the color she has brought from her Slavic or Italian peasant home, makes restitution by remolding her in more delicate, more alluring lines, gives her the high privilege of charm—and neurosis.

Williams and I pause at the Subway entrances and watch the earth suck in the crowd. It lets itself be swallowed up with meek good nature.

Our amazing good nature! Political philosophers have deplored the fact. They have urged us to be quicker-tempered, more resentful of being stepped upon, more inclined to write letters to the editor. I agree that only in that way can we be rid of political bosses, of brutal policemen, of ticket-speculators, of taxicab extortioners, of insolent waiters, of janitors, of indecent congestion in travel, of unheated cars in the winter and barred-up windows in summer. I am at heart with the social philosophers. But then I am not typical of the crowd. When my neighbor's elbow injects itself into the small of my back, I twist around and glower at him. I forget that his elbow is the innocent mechanical result of a whole series of elbows and backs extending the length of the car, to where the first cause operates in the form of a station-guard's shoulder ramming the human cattle into their stalls. In the faces about me there is no resentment. Instead of smashing windows, instead of raising barricades in the Subway and hanging the train-guards with their own lanterns about their necks, the crowd sways and bends to the lurching of the train, and young voices call out cheerfully, "Plenty of room ahead."

Horribly good-natured! We have taken a phrase which is the badge of our shame and turned

it into a jest. Plenty of room ahead! If this were a squat, ill-formed proletarian race obviously predestined to subjection, one might understand. But that a crowd of trim, well-cut, self-reliant Americans, sharp-featured, alert, insolent as I have called them, that they should submit is a puzzle. Perhaps it is because of the fierce democracy of it all. The crush, the enforced intimacies of physical contact, the feeling that a man's natural condition is to push and be pushed, to shove ahead when the opportunity offers and to take it like a man when no chance presents itself—that is equality. A seat in the Subway is like the prizes of life for which men have fought in these United States. You struggle, you win or lose. If the other man wins there is no envy; admiration rather, provided he has not shouldered and elbowed out of reason. That god-like freedom from envy is passing to-day, and perhaps the good nature of the crowd in the Subway will pass. I see signs of the approaching change. People do not call out, "Plenty of room ahead," so frequently as they used to.

Good-natured when dangling from the strap in the Subway, good-natured in front of baseball bulletins on Park Row, good-natured in the face of so much oppression and injustice, where is the

supposed cruelty of the "mob"? I am ready to affirm on oath that the mob is not vindictive, that it is not cruel. It may be a bit sharp-tongued, fickle, a bit mischievous, but in the heart of the crowd there is no evil passion. The evil comes from the leaders, the demagogues, the professional distorters of right thinking and right feeling. The crowd in the bleachers is not the clamorous, brute mob of tradition. I have watched faces in the bleachers and in the grand-stand and seen little of that fury which is supposed to animate the fan. For the most part he sits there with folded arms, thin-lipped, eager, but after all conscious that there are other things in life besides baseball. No, it is the leaders, the baseball editors, the cartoonists, the humorists, the professional stimulators of "local pride," with their exaggerated gloatings over a game won, their poisonous attacks upon a losing team, who are responsible. It is these demagogues who drill the crowd in the gospel of loving only a winner—but if I keep on I shall be in politics before I know it.

If you see in the homeward crowd in the Subway a face over which the pall of depression has settled, that face very likely is bent over the comic pictures in the evening paper. I cannot recall seeing anyone smile over these long serials of

humorous adventure which run from day to day and from year to year. I have seen readers turn mechanically to these lurid comics and pore over them, foreheads puckered into a frown, lips unconsciously spelling out the long legends which issue in the form of little balloons and lozenges from that amazing portrait gallery of dwarfs, giants, shrilling viragos and their diminutive husbands, devil-children, quadrupeds, insects,—an entire zoölogy. If any stimulus rises from these pages to the puzzled brain, the effect is not visible. I imagine that by dint of repetition through the years these grotesque creations have become a reality to millions of readers. It is no longer a question of humor, it is a vice. The Desperate Desmonds, the Newly-weds, and the Dingbats, have acquired a horrible fascination. Otherwise I cannot see why readers of the funny page should appear to be memorizing pages from Euclid.

This by way of anticipation. What the doctor has said of exercise being a habit which grows easy with time is true. It is the first five minutes of walking that are wearisome. I find myself strolling past Fourteenth Street, where I was to take my train for Belshazzar Court. Never mind, Forty-Second Street will do as well. I am now on a different Broadway. The crowd is no longer

north and south, but flows in every direction. It is churned up at every corner and spreads itself across the squares and open places. Its appearance has changed. It is no longer a factory population. Women still predominate, but they are the women of the professions and trades which center about Madison Square—business women of independent standing, women from the magazine offices, the publishing houses, the insurance offices. You detect the bachelor girl in the current which sets in toward the home quarters of the undomesticated, the little Bohemias, the foreign eating-places whose fixed *table d'hôte* prices flash out in illumined signs from the side streets. Still farther north and the crowd becomes tinged with the current of that Broadway which the outside world knows best. The idlers begin to mingle with the workers, men appear in English clothes with canes, women desperately corseted with plumes and jeweled reticules. You catch the first heart-beat of Little Old New York.

The first stirrings of this gayer Broadway die down as quickly almost as they manifested themselves. The idlers and those who minister to them have heard the call of the dinner hour and have vanished, into hotel doors, into shabbier quarters by no means in keeping with the cut of their gar-

ments and their apparent indifference to useful employment. Soon the street is almost empty. It is not a beautiful Broadway in this garish interval between the last of the matinée and shopping crowd and the vanguard of the night crowd. The monster electric sign-boards have not begun to gleam and flash and revolve and confound the eye and the senses. At night the electric Niagara hides the squalid fronts of ugly brick, the dark doorways, the clutter of fire-escapes, the rickety wooden hoardings. Not an imperial street this Broadway at 6.30 of a summer's afternoon. Cheap jewelry shops, cheap tobacconist's shops, cheap haberdasheries, cheap restaurants, grimy little newspaper agencies and ticket-offices, and "demonstration" stores for patent foods, patent waters, patent razors. . . .

O Gay White Way, you are far from gay in the fast fading light, before the magic hand of Edison wipes the wrinkles from your face and galvanizes you into hectic vitality; far from alluring with your tinsel shop-windows, with your puffy-faced, unshaven men leaning against door-posts and chewing pessimistic toothpicks, your sharp-eyed newsboys wise with the wisdom of the Tenderloin, and your itinerant women whose eyes flash from side to side. It is not in this guise that you draw

the hearts of millions to yourself, O dingy, Gay White Way, O Via Lobsteria Dolorosa!

Well, when a man begins to moralize it is time to go home. I have walked farther than I intended, and I am soft from lack of exercise, and tired. The romance of the crowd has disappeared. Romance cannot survive that short passage of Longacre Square, where the art of the theater and of the picture-postcard flourish in an atmosphere impregnated with gasoline. As I glance into the windows of the automobile sales-rooms and catch my own reflection in the enamel of Babylonian limousines I find myself thinking all at once of the children at home. They expand and fill up the horizon. Broadway disappears. I smile into the face of a painted promenader, but how is she to know that it is not at her I smile but at the sudden recollection of what the baby said at the breakfast-table that morning? Like all good New Yorkers when they enter the Subway, I proceed to choke up all my senses against contact with the external world, and thus resolving myself into a state of coma, I dip down into the bowels of the earth, whence in due time I am spewed out two short blocks from Belshazzar Court.

III

THE SHOW

FROM Belshazzar Court to the theater district is only a thirty minutes' ride in the Subway, but usually we reach the theater a few minutes after the rise of the curtain. Why this should be I have never been able to explain. It is a fact that on such nights we have dinner half an hour early, and Emmeline comes to the table quite ready to go out except that she has her cloak to slip on. Nevertheless we are a few minutes late. While Emmeline is slipping on her cloak I glance through the editorial page in the evening paper, answer the telephone, and recall several bits of work I overlooked at the office. I then give Harold a drink of water in bed, help Emmeline with her hat, clean out the drawers in my writing-table, tell Harold to stop talking to himself and go to sleep, and hunt for the theater tickets in the pockets of my street clothes. After that I have time to read a page or two of John Galsworthy and go in to see that Harold is well covered up. Emmeline

always makes me save time by having me ring for the elevator while she is drawing on her gloves. Nevertheless we are a few minutes late for the first act.

But if I frequently leave Belshazzar Court in a state of mild irritation, my spirits rise the moment we enter the Subway. I am stirred by the lights and the crowd, this vibrant New York crowd of which I have spoken before, so aggressively youthful, so prosperous, so strikingly overdressed, and carrying off its finery with a dash that is quite remarkable considering that we are only a half-way-up middle-class crowd jammed together in a public conveyance. Since our trip abroad some years ago I am convinced that the Parisian woman needs all the *chic* and *esprit* she can encompass. I will affirm that in half an hour in the Subway, at any time of day, I see more charming faces than we saw during six weeks in Paris. I have hitherto been timid about expressing this opinion in print, but only the other night I sat up to read *Innocents Abroad* after many years. What Mark Twain has to say of the Parisian grisette encourages me to make this confession of faith. As I swing from my strap and scan the happy, well-to-do faces under the glow of the electric lamps, I sometimes find myself wondering what reason

William D. Haywood can possibly have for being dissatisfied with things as they are.

We are usually late at the theater, but not always. There are times when Harold will get through with his dinner without being once called to order. He then announces that he is tired and is anxious to get into bed. On such occasions Emmeline grows exceedingly nervous. She feels his head and makes him open his mouth and say, "Aaa-h-h," so that she may look down his throat. If Harold carries out his promise and does promptly go to sleep, it intensifies our anxiety and threatens to spoil our evening; but it does also save a little time. It brings us to the theater a minute or two before the curtain goes up, and gives us a chance to study the interior decorations of the auditorium, completed at great cost, the exact amount of which I cannot recall without my evening paper. If you will remember that we go to the theater perhaps a dozen times during the season, and that the number of new theaters on Broadway every season is about that number, you will see why very frequently we should be finding ourselves in a new house.

It is a matter of regret to me that I cannot grow enthusiastic over theatrical interiors. I do my best, but the novel arrangement of proscenium

boxes and the upholstery scheme leave me cold. I recall what the evening paper said of the new Blackfriars. Its architecture is a modification of the Parthenon at Athens, and it is nine stories high and equipped with business offices and bachelor quarters. It was erected as one of a chain of amusement houses stretching clear across to San Francisco, by a manager who began three years ago as a moving-picture impresario in the Bronx. Having made a hit in the "legitimate" with an unknown actress in a play by an unknown writer, he immediately signed a contract with the playwright for his next six plays, hired six companies for the road, and built a chain of theaters to house the plays. This is the American of it. If three years from now this Napoleon of Long-acre Square is back at his five-cent moving-picture place in the Bronx it will also be the American of it. When I tell Emmeline that the ceiling has been copied from a French château, she looks up and says nothing.

The curtain goes up on the famous ten-thousand-dollar drawing-room set which has been the hit of the season. The telephone on the real Louis XVI table rings, the English butler comes in to answer the call, and the play is on. The extraordinary development of the telephone on the

New York stage is possibly our most notable and meritorious contribution to contemporary dramatic art. The telephone serves a far higher purpose than Sardou's parlor-maid with the feather-duster. It is plain, of course, that the dramatist's first purpose is to sound a universal human note. And the telephone is something which comes very close to every one of us. If the English butler, instead of answering a telephone call, picks up the instrument and himself calls for some familiar number, like 3100 Spring, which is Police Headquarters, you can actually perceive the responsive thrill which sweeps the house. The note of universal humanity has been struck.

This point is worth keeping in mind. If I am somewhat insistent on being in time for the beginning of the play, it is because I want to subject myself to the magic touch of the telephone bell, and not because I am afraid of missing the drift of the playwright's story. Of that there is no danger, because I know the story already. I don't know whether college courses in the drama still spend as much time as they used to fifteen years ago in laying emphasis on the fact that the first act of a play is devoted to exposition. If college courses are really as modern as they are said to be, professors of the drama will now be teaching

their students that the playwright's real preparation for his conflict and his climax is not to be found in the first act at all, but several weeks before the play is produced, in the columns of the daily press.

If Goethe were writing *Faust* to-day he would not lay his Prologue in Heaven but in the newspapers. I know what I am about to see and hear, because I have read all the newspaper chatter while the play was in incubation and in rehearsal. I have been taken into confidence by the managers just before they sailed for Europe in the imperial suite of the *Imperator*. If they omitted anything, they have cabled it over from Paris at enormous expense. Through interviews with stars and leading ladies, through calculated indiscretions on the part of the box-office with regard to advance sales, through the newspaper reviews after the first night, I am educated up to the act of seeing a play with a thoroughness that the post-graduate department of Johns Hopkins might envy.

Consequently, there is not the slightest danger, even if we come late, that I shall laugh in the wrong place or fail to laugh in the right place, or that Emmeline will fail to grope for her handkerchief at the right time. Through the same agency of the newspaper the funniest lines, the strongest

“punch,” the most sympathetic bits of dialogue have been located and charted. At college I used to be told that the tremendous appeal of the Greek drama was dependent in large measure on the fact that it dealt with stories which were perfectly familiar to the public. The Athenian audience came to the theater expectant, surcharged with emotion, waiting eagerly for the proper cue to let its feelings go. But Athens was not conceivably better worked up than New York is to-day when it goes to the theater.

Even James M. Barrie does it. I remember when Emmeline and I went to see Barrie's *What Every Woman Knows*, some years ago. What we really went for, like ten thousand other good people of New York, was to hear the much-advertised tag with which Barrie ended his play, to the effect, namely, that woman was not made out of man's rib but out of his funny bone. I do not recall that a single dramatic reviewer in New York after the first night omitted to concentrate on that epigram; if he did he must have been called down severely by the managing editor. Now it is my sincere belief that the Barrie joke is a poor one. It is offensively smart, it has the “punch” which it is Barrie's merit to omit so regularly from his plays. It is inferior to any number of delightful

lines in that really beautiful play. That is, I say so now when I am in my right senses. But when Emmeline and I, under the hypnotic spell of the newspapers, went to see *What Every Woman Knows*, what was it that we waited for through four longish acts,—what but that unhappy quip which everybody else was waiting for? Of course we laughed and applauded. We laughed in the same shamefaced and dutiful spirit in which people stand up in restaurants when the band plays the “Star-Spangled Banner.” Often I wonder what would Shakespeare and Molière not have accomplished if they had had the newspapers to hypnotize the audience for them instead of being compelled to do so themselves.

Hypnotism everywhere. One of the popular plays that we never went to see was recommended to Emmeline by a very charming woman who said it was a play which every woman ought to take her husband to see. In itself that is as admirable a bit of dramatic criticism as could be distilled out of several columns of single-leaded minion. But the trouble was that this charming woman had not thought it out for herself. She had found the phrase in the advertising notices of this play. It was so pat, so quotable, and the press agent was so evidently sincere in using it, that it seemed a

pity not to pass it on to others. After half a dozen friends had recommended the play to Emmeline as a good one for me to be taken to, she rebelled and said she would not go. She was intellectually offended. Her ostensible reason was that she doubted whether the play would do me any good. I had my revenge not long after when I offered to take her to a play which dealt with woman's extravagance in dress, and which the advertisements said every man ought to take his wife to see. Emmeline said that my sense of humor often betrays me.

This, I am sorry to say, happens rather frequently. My feeble jest about the play which all wives ought to be taken to see was devised on the spur of the moment. But there is one sly bit of humor which I regularly employ and which I never fail to regret. This happens whenever, in reply to Emmeline's suggestion that we take in one of the new plays, I say with malice aforethought that the piece is one to which a man would hardly care to take his wife. The response is instantaneous. It makes no difference that our views on this subject are identical. Apostrophizing me as an exemplar of that muddle-headed thing which is interchangeably known as fossilized Puritanism and Anglo-Saxon hypocrisy, Emmeline begins by ask-

ing whether a play that is not fit for a man's wife to see is fit for the husband of that wife. Since I agree with her, the question remains unanswerable. She then goes on to ask whether it might not be an excellent thing for the theater to abolish the distinction between plays that a man's wife can see and those she cannot see, and to make it a law, preferably a Federal law based on social justice, that no man shall be allowed to enter a theater without a woman companion.

It is a sore point with her. We had as guest at dinner one night an estimable young man who told us that, being anxious to take his betrothed to a certain play, he had bought a ticket for the family circle the night before, to see whether the play was a fit one for the young woman to be taken to. Emmeline cast one baleful glance at the young man, which he fortunately failed to catch, his head being bent over the asparagus. But she has never asked him to call again. To me, afterward, she scarified the poor young man.

"Imagine," she said. "Here is a man in love with a woman. He is about to take her, and give himself to her, for better and for worse. He asks her to face the secrets of life and the fear of death with him. But he is afraid to take her to the theater with him."

The joy of combat makes me forget that my views are quite the same.

"It shows his thoughtfulness," I said. "There are any number of nasty plays in town."

"Why are they here?" she asked.

"I'm sure I don't know."

"I'll tell you why," she said: "to meet the demand for plays that a man cannot take his wife to."

I assured her that this common phrase really did not mean all she read into it. The average citizen, I said, does not look upon his wife as a tender plant to be shielded against the breath of harm. It was only another instance of our falling in with a phrase, and repeating it in parrot fashion, until we are surprised to find ourselves living up to it. But Emmeline said it was Anglo-Saxon hypocrisy superimposed on the universal *Sklavenmoral* from which woman suffers. At this point I am convinced that a sense of humor often does betray one.

Steeped in the sincere, if often ferociously sincere, realism of the Russian writers, it is plain why one should revolt against the catch-phrases which make up so large a part of our speech and thought. Because she knows the realism of European literature, Emmeline grows angry with

the stage manager's realism in which we have made such notable progress of late. She has refused to be impressed by Mr. Belasco's marvelous reproduction of a cheap restaurant, in which the tiled walls, the coffee-urns, the cash-registers, and the coat-racks were so unmistakably actual as to make a good many of us forget that the action which takes place in this restaurant might just as well have taken place in the Aquarium or on top of the Jungfrau. There was another play. For weeks, the author, the producer, and several assistants (I am now quoting press authority) had been searching the city for the exact model of a hall bedroom in a theatrical boarding-house such as the playwright had in mind. They found what they were looking for. When the curtain rose on the opening night, the public, duly kept informed as to the progress of the quest, naturally rose with enthusiasm to the perfect picture of a mean chamber in a squalid boarding-house. The scene was appalling in its detail of tawdry poverty. Except for the fact that the bedroom was about sixty feet long, forty feet wide, and fifty feet high, the effect of destitution was startling.

But there is a more dangerous realism. Our stage has progressed beyond this actuality of real doors with real door-knobs. We have attained as

far as the external realism of human types. As exhibited on the stage to-day, the shop-girls, the "crooks," the detectives, the clerks, the traveling salesmen, the shady financiers, are startlingly true to life in appearance, in walk, in speech. For that one ought presumably to be thankful. Presumably it is progress to have shop-girls, clerks, financiers, "crooks," and their pursuers, instead of Pinero's drawing-room heroines and bounders, or Henry Bernstein's highly galvanized boulevardiers. If people with the look of Broadway, with the tang and speech of Broadway, walk the boards, what more would one have?

"Soul," says Emmeline, and she lashes out at the beautifully made puppets on the stage. External realism has gone as far as it may, but beneath the surface everything is false. The life of these amazingly lifelike figures is false, the story is false, the morals and the conclusions are false. At bottom it is tawdry melodrama. New tricks of the trade have been mastered, but the same crude, childish views of life confront us, and the same utter lack of that form which is the joy of art. The American stage never had an excess of form. We have less now than we ever had.

As I think back over the last few paragraphs I find that I may have given an utterly wrong im-

pression of how the theater affects Emmeline and me. It would be deplorable if the reader should get to think that we are high-brows. It is quite the other way. Between the acts and at home, the two of us may be tremendously critical, but while the business of the stage is under way we are grateful for the least excuse to yield ourselves to the spirit of the thing. Provided, only, there is nothing in the play about a young woman who beards a king of finance and frightens him into surrendering a million dollars' worth of bonds. Financiers and their female private secretaries I cannot abide. Otherwise, I delight in nearly everything: in *The Old Homestead*, in George M. Cohan, in *Fanny's First Play*, and in the farce-comedies where a recreant husband, surprised by his wife, steps backward into his own suit-case. Emmeline confesses that she has seldom seen a proposal of marriage on the stage without wanting to sniffle sympathetically.

Because I take pleasure in seeing frivolous young men step into their own suit-cases I am not averse to musical comedy. Emmeline rarely accompanies me; not because she is afraid that it is the kind of a play a man should not take his wife to, but because it does not interest her. She is fond of Gilbert and Sullivan, and she likes *The*

Chocolate Soldier; but of our own native musical comedy I think she has seen only one example.

The play was called *The Girl from Grand Rapids*. The principal characters are an American millionaire and his daughter who are traveling in Switzerland. They come to the little village of Sprudelsaltz and are mistaken by the populace for the German Kaiser and his Chancellor who are expected on a secret mission. The American millionaire, in order to outwit a business rival who belongs to the Furniture Trust, consents to play the part. He accounts for the apparent sex of his Chancellor by declaring that the evil designs of certain French spies have made it necessary for his companion to assume this peculiar disguise. The Chancellor falls in love with the young British attaché, who has come to Switzerland for the purpose of unearthing certain important secrets relative to the German navy. At their first meeting the supposed German Chancellor and the British naval attaché sing a duet of which the refrain is, "Oh, take me back to Bryant Square." Ultimately the identity of the pseudo Kaiser and his Chancellor is discovered. They are threatened by the infuriated Swiss populace in fur jackets and tights, and are saved only through the intervention of a comic Irish waiter named Gansen-

schmidt. They escape from Switzerland and in the second act we find them at Etah, in Greenland, where the millionaire's daughter is compelled to wed an Eskimo chieftain who turns out to be the British naval attaché in disguise. The third act shows an Arab carnival in the Sahara. Repeatedly, in the course of the evening, Emmeline asked me why I laughed.

There is also a business motive in my playgoing. I am learning how to build a complicated dramatic plot. Years ago I set out to write a play. Like all people of slipshod habits I have sudden attacks of acute systematization, and when I began my play, I assigned so much time for working out the plot, so much for character-development, so much for actually writing the dialogue. The scheme did not quite work out. I forget the details; the point is that at the end of a year I had written all my dialogue, but had made little progress with my character-development and had done nothing whatever on my plot. Since that time I have moved ahead. My characters are to me fairly alive now. But I still have a plot and incidents to find for my play. Emmeline says that my quest is a vain one. She is convinced that I have no gift for dramatic complication, and that the best I can hope for is to do something like

Bernard Shaw. But I refuse to give in. I go to see how other men have done the trick, and some day, who knows, I may yet find a skeleton on which to hang my polished and spirited dialogue.

Between the acts there are two things which one naturally does. I read in the programme what men will wear during the winter, and I scan faces, a habit which I find growing upon me in all sorts of public places and which will some day bring me into serious trouble. People are rather stolid between the acts. It is a very rare play in which the sense of illusion carries over from one act to the next and is reflected in the faces of the spectators. The perfect play, as I conceive it, should keep the audience in a single mood from beginning to end. Between the fall and the rise of the curtain the spell ought to hold and show itself in a flushed, bright-eyed gayety, in a feverish chatter which should carry on the playwright's message until he resumes the business of his narrative. But as a rule I am not exalted between the acts, and I perceive that my neighbors are not. It is not a play we are watching, but three or four separate plays. When the curtain descends we lean back into an ordinary world. The business of the stage drops from us. We resume conversa-

tion interrupted in the Subway. A young woman on the left furnishes her companion with details of last night's dance. Two young men in front argue over the cost of staging the piece. One says it cost \$10,000, and the other says \$15,000, and they pull out their favorite evening papers from under the seat and quote them to each other. Emmeline wonders whether she looked down far enough into Harold's throat when he said, "Aaa-h-h."

It is not entirely our own fault if we lose the sense of continuous illusion between the acts. There is little in the ordinary play to carry one forward from one act to the next. We still talk of suspense and movement and climax, whereas our plays are not organic plays at all, but mere vaudeville. They do not depend for their effect on cumulative interest, but on the individual "punch." Drama, melodrama, comedy, and farce have their own laws. But our latest dramatic form combines all forms in a swift medley of effects that I can describe by no other term than vaudeville. George M. Cohan is our representative dramatist, not because he has flung the star-spangled banner to the breeze, but because he has cast all consistency to the winds. Who ever heard of a melodramatic farce? Mr. Cohan is writing

them all the time. They are plays in which people threaten each other with automatic pistols to the accompaniment of remarks which elicit roars of laughter.

I know, of course, that Shakespeare has a drunken porter on the stage while Macbeth is doing Duncan to death. But George M. Cohan is different. I have in mind a homeless little village heroine of Mr. Cohan's who is about to board a train for the great city with its pitfalls and privations. Emmeline was quite affected by the pathetic little figure on the platform, with the shabby suit-case—until six chorus men in beautifully creased trousers waltzed out on the train platform and did a clog-dance and sang, "Good-by, Mary, don't forget to come back home." I can't conceive Shakespeare doing this sort of thing. It is gripping while it lasts, but when the curtain falls, one chiefly thinks how late it will be before one gets home.

But if the playwright's story does not always hold me, the people on the stage seldom fail to bring me under the spell. I am not a professional critic and I have no standards of histrionic skill to apply. It may be, as people say, that our actors are deficient in imagination, in the power of emotional utterance, in facial eloquence, in

the art of creating illusion. Perhaps it is true that they seldom get into the skin of their characters, and never are anything but themselves. But precisely because they are themselves I like them. I like their lithe, clean-cut length, their strong, clean-shaven faces, their faultless clothes. I like the frequency with which they change from morning to evening dress. I like the ease with which they order taxicabs, press buttons for the club waiter, send out cablegrams to Shanghai, and make appointments to meet at expensive road-houses which are reached only by automobile. The nonchalance with which George M. Cohan's people distribute large sums is a quickening spectacle to me.

After this it will be difficult for anyone to accuse me of being a high-brow. Let me dispose of this matter beyond all doubt. I do not understand what people mean when they speak of intellectual actors and the intellectual interpretation of stage rôles. Possibly it is a defective imagination in me which makes me insist that actors shall look their part physically. Not all the imaginative genius in the world will reconcile me to a thin Falstaff, suggestive of vegetarianism and total abstinence. I am not even sure that I know what an intellectualized Hamlet is. I in-

sist upon a Hamlet who shall wear black and who shall recite slowly the lines which shake me so when I read them at home, instead of intellectually swallowing the lines as so many do. I cannot see how Mrs. Fiske's intellectuality qualifies her for playing robust, full-blooded women like Tess, or like Cyprienne in *Divorçons*. But I like Mrs. Fiske as Becky Sharpe and as Ibsen's Nora, because both were small women.

I imagine it is a sign of Wagner's genius that he made all his women of heroic stature. He must have foreseen that by the time a singer has learned to interpret Brünnhilde she is apt to be mature and imposing. Thus I feel; and I know that most of the people in the audience agree with me. Those who do not have probably read in their evening papers that they were about to see an intellectual interpretation. Whenever they are puzzled by the actor they ascribe it to his intellect.

When the final curtain falls, the play drops from us like a discarded cloak. People smile, dress, tell each other that it was a pretty good show, and hold the door open for the ladies to pass out into the glow and snap of Broadway. We do not carry illusion away with us from the theater. In spite of the fact that we have purchased our

tickets in the conviction that every husband and wife ought to see the play, we do not correlate the theater with life. Primarily it is a show. We do not ask much. If it has offered us a hearty laugh or two, a thrill, a pressure on the tear-ducts, this tolerant American public, this patient, innocent, cynical public that is always prepared to be cheated, feels grateful; and there ends the matter.

And Aristotle? And the purging of the emotions through pity and terror? I still remember a play called *The Diamond Breaker*, which I saw on Third Avenue when Benjamin Harrison was President. I remember how the young mining engineer was foully beset by his rival and tied hand and foot and dropped into the open chute that led straight into the pitiless iron teeth of the stone-crushing machine. I remember how the heroine rushed out upon the gangway and seized the young engineer by the hair; and the wheels stopped; and the girl fainted; and strong men in the audience wept. Is it my own fault that such sensations are no longer to be had? Or has the drama indeed degenerated within these twenty years?

From the evening papers I gather that the crowd, after leaving the new nine-story Black-

friars Theater, modeled after the Parthenon at Athens, invades and overruns the all-night restaurants on Broadway. Yet the trains in the Subway are jammed, and Emmeline has to stand more than halfway to Belshazzar Court.

IV

THE GAME

I

OFTEN I think how monotonous life must be to Jerome D. Travers or Francis Ouimet,—compared, that is, with what life can offer to a player of my quality. When Travers drives off, it is a question whether the ball will go 245 yards or 260 yards; and a difference of fifteen yards is obviously nothing to thrill over. Whereas, when I send the ball from the tee the possible range of variation is always 100 yards, running from 155 down to 55; provided, that is, that the ball starts at all. To me there is always a freshness of surprise in having the club meet the ball, which Travers, I dare say, has not experienced in the last dozen years.

With him, of course, it is not sport, but mathematics. A wooden club will give one result, an iron another. The sensation of getting greater distance with a putting iron than with a brassie

is something Ouimet can hardly look forward to. Always mathematics, with this kind of swing laying the ball fifteen feet on the farther side of the hole, and that kind of chop laying it ten feet on the nearer side. I have frequently thought that playing off the finals for the golf championship is a waste of time. All that is necessary is to call in Professor Münsterberg and have him test Travers's blood-pressure and reaction index on the morning of the game, and then take "Chick" Evans's blood-pressure and reaction index. The referee would then award the game to Travers or to Evans by 2 up and 1 to play, or whatever score Professor Münsterberg's figures would indicate.

The true zest of play is for the duffer. When he swings club or racket he can never tell what miracles of accomplishment or negation it will perform. That is not an inanimate instrument he holds in his hands, but a living companion, a totem comrade whom he is impelled to propitiate, as Hiawatha crooned to his arrow before letting it fly from the string. And that is why duffers are peculiarly qualified to write about games, or for that matter, about everything,—literature, music, or art,—as they have always done. To be sufficiently inexpert in anything is to be filled

with corresponding awe at the hidden soul in that thing. To be sufficiently removed from perfection is to worship it. Poets, for example, are preëminently the interpreters of life because they make such an awful mess of the practice of living. And for the same reason poets always retain the zest of life—because the poet never knows whether his next shot will land him on the green or in the sandpit, in Heaven or in the gutter. The reader will now be aware that in describing my status as a golfer I am not making a suicidal confession. On the contrary, I am presenting my credentials.

II

A great many people have been searching during ever so many years for the religion of democracy. I believe I have found it. That is, not a religion, if by it you mean a system completely equipped with creed, formularies, organization, home and foreign missions, schisms, an empty-church problem, an underpaid-minister's problem, a Socialist and I. W. W. problem, and the like; although, if I had the time to pursue my researches, I might find a parallel to many of these things. What I have in mind is a great democratic rite, a ceremonial which is solemnized on

six days in the week during six months in the year by large masses of men with such unfailing regularity and such unquestioning good faith that I cannot help thinking of it as essentially a religious performance.

It is a simple ceremonial, but impressive, like all manifestations of the soul of a multitude. I need only close my eyes to call up the picture vividly: It is a day of brilliant sunshine and a great crowd of men is seated in the open air, a crowd made up of all conditions, ages, races, temperaments, and states of mind. The crowd has sat there an hour or more, while the afternoon sun has slanted deeper into the west and the shadows have crept across greensward and hard-baked clay to the eastern horizon. Then, almost with a single motion,—the time may be somewhere between four-thirty and five o'clock,—this multitude of divers minds and tempers rises to its feet and stands silent, while one might count twenty perhaps. Nothing is said; no high priest intones prayer for this vast congregation; nevertheless the impulse of ten thousand hearts is obviously focused into a single desire. When you have counted twenty the crowd sinks back to the benches. A half minute at most and the rite is over.

I am speaking, of course, of the second half of the seventh inning, when the home team comes to bat. The precise nature of this religious half minute depends on the score. If the home team holds a safe lead of three or four runs; if the home pitcher continues to show everything, and the infield gives no sign of cracking, and the outfield isn't bothered by the sun, then I always imagine a fervent *Te Deum* arising from that inarticulate multitude, and the peace of a great contentment falling over men's spirits as they settle back in their seats. If the game is in the balance you must imagine the concentration of ten thousand wills on the spirit of the nine athletes in the field, ten thousand wills telepathically pouring their energies into the powerful arm of the man in the box, into the quick eye of the man on first base, and the sense of justice of the umpire.

But if the outlook for victory is gloomy, the rite does not end with the silent prayer I have described. As the crowd subsides to the benches there arises a chant which I presume harks back to the primitive litanies of the Congo forests. Voices intone unkind words addressed to the players on the other team. Ten thousand voices chanting in unison for victory, twenty thousand feet stamping confusion to the opposing pitcher

—if this is not worship of the most fundamental sort, because of the most primitive sort, then what is religion?

Consider the mere number of participants in this national rite of the seventh inning. I have said a multitude of ten thousand. But if the day be Saturday and the place of worship one of the big cities of either of the major leagues, the crowd may easily be twice as large. And all over the country at almost the same moment, exultant or hopeful or despairing multitudes are rising to their feet. Multiply this number of worshipers by six days—or by seven days if you are west of the Alleghanies, where Sunday baseball has somehow been reconciled with a still vigorous Puritanism—and it is apparent that a continuous wave of spiritual ardor sweeps over this continent between three-thirty and six P.M. from the middle of April to the middle of October. We can only guess at the total number of worshipers. The three major leagues will account for five millions. Add the minor leagues and the state leagues and the interurban contests—and the total of seventh-inning communicants grows overwhelming. Take the twenty-five million males of voting age in this country, assume one visit per head to a baseball park in the season, and the result is dazzling.

It is easier to estimate the number of worshippers than the intensity of the mood. I have no gauge for measuring the spiritual fervor which exhales on the baseball stadiums of the country from mid-April to mid-October, growing in ardor with the procession of the months, until it attains a climax of orgiastic frenzy in the World's Series. Foreigners are in the habit of calling this an unspiritual nation. But what nation so frequently tastes—or for that matter has ever tasted—the emotional experience of the score tied in the ninth inning with the bases full? Foreigners call us an unspiritual people because they do not know the meaning of a double-header late in September—a double-header with two seventh innings.

I began by renouncing any claim to the discovery of a complete religion of democracy. But the temptation to point out parallels is irresistible. If Dr. Frazer had not finished with his *Golden Bough*,—or if he is thinking of a supplementary volume,—I can see how easily the raw material of the sporting columns would shape itself to religious forces and systems in his hands. If religious ceremonial has its origin in the play instinct of man, why go back to remote origins like the Australian corroboree and neglect Ty Cobb

stealing second? If religion has its origin in primitive man's worship of the eternal rebirth of earth's fructifying powers with the advent of spring, how can we neglect the vivid stirring in the hearts of millions that marks the departure of the teams for spring training in Texas?

If I were a trained professional sociologist instead of a mere spectator at the Polo Grounds, it seems to me that I should have little trouble in tracing the history of the game several thousand years back of its commonly accepted origin somewhere about 1830. I could easily trace back the catcher's mask to the mask worn by the medicine-man among the Swahili of the West Coast. The three bases and home-plate would easily be the points of the compass, going straight back to the sun myth. Murray pulling down a fly in left field would hark back straight to Zoroaster and the sun-worshippers. Millions of primitive hunters must have anointed, and prayed to, their weapons before Jeff Tesreau addressed his invocation to the spit ball; and when Mathewson winds himself up for delivering the ball, he is not far removed from the sacred warrior dancer of Polynesia. If only I were a sociologist!

An ideal faith, this religion of baseball, the more you examine it. See, for instance, how it

satisfies the prime requirement of a true faith that it shall ever be present in the hearts of the faithful; practiced not once a week on Sunday, but six times a week—and in the West seven times a week; professed not only in the appointed place of worship, but in the Subway before the game, and in the Subway after the game, and in the offices and shops and factories on rainy days. If a true religion is that for which a man will give up wife and children and forget the call of meat and drink, what shall we say of baseball? If a true religion is not dependent on æsthetic trappings, but voices itself under the open sky and among the furniture of common life, this is again the true religion. The stadium lies open to the sun, the rain, and the wind. The mystic sense is not stimulated by Gothic roof-traceries and the dimmed light of stained-glass windows. The congregation rises from wooden benches on a concrete flooring; it stands in the full light of a summer afternoon and lets its eyes rest on walls of bill-boards reminiscent of familiar things,—linen collars, table-waters, tobacco, safety-razors. Surely we have here a clear, dry, real religion of the kind that Bernard Shaw would approve.

I have said quite enough on this point. Otherwise I should take time to show how this national

faith has created its own architecture, as all great religions have done. Our national contribution to the building arts has so far been confined to two forms—the skyscraper and the baseball stadium, corresponding precisely to the two great religions of business and of play. I know that the Greeks and Romans had amphitheaters, and that the word stadium is not of native origin. But between the Coliseum and the baseball park there is all the difference that lies between imperialism and democracy. The ancient amphitheaters were built as much for monuments as for playgrounds. Consequently they were impressed with an æsthetic character which is totally repugnant to our idea of a baseball park.

There is no spiritual resemblance between Vespasian's amphitheater with its stone and marble, its galleries and imperial tribunes, its purple canvases stretched out against the sun—and our own Polo Grounds. Iron girders, green wooden benches, and a back fence frescoed with safety-razors and ready-made clothing—what more would a modern man have? The ancient amphitheaters were built for slaves who had to be flattered and amused by pretty things. The baseball park is for freemen who pay for their pleasures and can afford the ugliest that money can buy.

III

The art of keeping my eye on the ball is something I no longer have hope of mastering. If I fail to watch the ball it is because I am continually watching faces about me. The same habit pursues me on the street and in all public places—usually with unpleasant consequences, though now and then I have the reward of catching the reflection of a great event or a tense moment in the face of the man next to me. Then, indeed, I am repaid; but it is a procedure fatal to the scientific pursuit of baseball. While I am hunting in the face of the man next to me for the reflection of Doyle's stinging single between first and second base, I hear a roar and turn to find that something dramatic has happened at third, and a stout young man in a green hat behind me says that the runner was out by a yard and should be benched for trying to spike the man on the bag.

The eagle vision of the stout young man behind me always fills me with amazement and envy. I concede his superior knowledge of the game. He knows every man on the field by his walk. He recalls under what circumstances the identical play was pulled off three years ago in Philadelphia. He knows beforehand just at what moment

Mr. McGraw will take his left fielder out of the game and send in a "pinch hitter." Long years of steady application will no doubt supply this kind of post-graduate expertship. But when it is a question not of theory but of a simple, concrete play which I did happen to be watching carefully, how is it that the man behind me can see that the runner was out by a yard and had nearly spiked the man on the bag, whereas all I can see is a tangle of legs and arms and a cloud of dust? My eyesight is normal; how does my neighbor manage to see all that he does as quickly as he does?

The answer is that he does not see. When he declares that the runner was out by a yard, and I turn around and regard him with envy, it is a comfort to have the umpire decide that the runner was safe after all. It is a comfort to hear the man behind me say that the ball cut the plate squarely, and to have the umpire call it a ball. It shakes my faith somewhat in human nature, but it strengthens my self-confidence. Yet it fails to shake the self-confidence of the man behind me. When I turn about to see his crestfallen face, I find him chewing peanut-brittle in a state of supreme calm, and as I stare at him, fascinated by such peace of mind in the face of discomfiture, I

hear a yell and turn to find the third baseman and all the outfield congregated near the left bleachers. I have made a psychological observation, but have missed the beginning of a double play.

My chagrin is temporary. As the game goes on my self-confidence grows enormously. I am awakening to the fact that the man behind me knows as little about the game as I do. When the pitcher of the visiting team delivered the first ball of the first inning, the man behind me remarked that the pitcher didn't have anything. My neighbor could tell by the pitcher's arm action that he was stale, and he recalled that the pitcher in question never did last more than half a game. This declaration of absolute belief did not stand in the way of a contradictory remark, made some time in the fifth inning, with our team held so far to two scratch hits. The stout young man behind me then said that the visiting pitcher was a wonder, that he had everything, that he would keep on fanning them till the cows came home, and that he was, in fact, the best southpaw in both leagues, having once struck out eight men in an eleven-inning game at Boston.

When a man gives vent to such obviously irreconcilable statements in less than five innings, it

is inevitable that I should turn in my seat to get a square look at him. But I still find him calm and eating peanut-brittle; and as I stare at him and try to classify him, the man at the bat does something which brings half the crowd to its feet. By dint of much inquiry I discover that he has rolled a slow grounder to third and has made his base on it. Decidedly, psychology and baseball will not mix.

I suppose the stout young man behind me is a Fan,—provided there is really such a type. My own belief is that the Fan, as the baseball writers and cartoonists have depicted him, is a very rare thing. To the extent that he does exist he is the creation, not of the baseball diamond, but of the sporting writer and the comic artist. The Fan models himself consciously upon the type set before him in his favorite newspaper. It is once more a case of nature imitating art. If Mr. Gibson, many years ago, had not drawn a picture of fat men in shirt-sleeves, perspiring freely and waving straw hats, the newspaper artist would not have imitated Mr. Gibson, and the baseball audience would not have imitated the newspapers. It is true that I have seen baseball crowds in frenzy; but these have been isolated moments of high tension when all of us have been brought to

our feet with loud explosions of joy or agony. But the perspiring, ululant Fan in shirt-sleeves, ceaselessly waving his straw hat, uttering imprecations on the enemy, his enthusiasm obviously aroused by stimulants preceding his arrival at the baseball park, is far from being representative of the baseball crowd.

The spirit of the audience is best expressed in quite a different sort of person. He is always to be seen at the Polo Grounds, and when I think of baseball audiences it is he who rises before me, to the exclusion of his fat, perspiring brother with the straw hat. He is young, tall, slender, wears blue serge, and even on very cool days in the early spring he goes without an overcoat. He sits out the game with folded arms, very erect, thin-lipped, and with the break of a smile around the eyes. He is usually alone, and has little to say. He is not a snob; he will respond to his neighbor's comments in moments of exceptional emotional stress, but he does not wear his heart on his sleeve.

I imagine him sitting, in very much the same attitude, in college lecture-rooms, or taking instructions from the head of the office. Complete absorption under complete control—he fascinates me. While the stout young man behind me chatters on for his own gratification, forgetting one

moment what he said the moment before,—an empty-headed young man with a tendency to profanity as the game goes on,—this other trim young figure in blue serge, with folded arms, sits immobile, watching, watching with a calm that must come out of real knowledge and experience, enjoying the thing immensely, but giving no other sign than a sharper glint of the eye, a slight opening of the lips. In a moment of crisis, being only human, he rises with the rest of us, but deliberately, to follow the course of a high fly down the foul line far toward the bleachers. When the ball is caught he smiles and sits down and folds his arms. I envy him his capacity for drinking in enjoyment without display. This is the kind of Fan I should like to be.

IV

Does my thin-lipped friend in blue serge read the sporting page? I wonder. My own opinion is that he does not, except to glance through the box-score. It is for the other man, I imagine, the stout young man behind me who detected from the first ball thrown that the pitcher's arm was no good, and who later identified him as the best southpaw in the two leagues, that the sporting

page with its humor, its philosophy, its art, and its poetry, is edited. The sporting page has long ceased to be a mere chronicle of sport and has become an encyclopædia, an anthology, a five-foot book-shelf, a little university in itself. The life mirrored in the pictures on the sporting page is not restricted to the prize-ring and the diamond, though the language of the prize-ring and the baseball field is its vernacular. The art of the sporting page has expanded beyond the narrow field of play to life itself, viewed as play.

The line of development is plain: from pictures of the Fan at the game the advance has been to pictures of the Fan at home, and so on to his wife and his young, and his *Weltanschauung*, until now the artist frequently casts aside all pretense of painting sport and draws pictures of humanity. The sporting cartoon has become a social chronicle. It is still found on the sporting page; partly, I suppose, because it originated there, partly because there is no other place in the paper where it can get so wide an audience. It entraps the man in the street who comes to read baseball and remains to study contemporary life—in violent, exaggerated form, but life none the less.

Even poetry. Sporting columns to-day run

heavily to verse. Here, as well as in the pictures, there has been an evolution. From the mere rhymed chronicle of what happened to Christy Mathewson we have passed on to generalized reflections on life, expressed, of course, in terms of the game. Kipling has been the great model. His lilt and his "punch" are so admirably adapted to the theme and the audience. How many thousand parodies of "Danny Deever" and "The Vampire" have the sporting editors printed? I should hesitate to say. But Kipling and his younger imitators, with Henley's "Invictus" and "When I was a King in Babylon," and the late Langdon Smith's "Evolution": "When I was a Tadpole and You were a Fish"—have become the patterns for a vast popular poetry which deals in the main with the red-blooded virtues,—grit, good humor, and clean hitting,—but which drops with surprising frequency for an optimist race into the mood of Ecclesiastes:—

Demon of Slow and of Fast Ones,
Monarch of Moisture and Smoke,
Who made Wagner swing at Anyoldthing,
And Baker look like a Joke.

And the writer goes on to remind the former king of the boxmen that sooner or later "Old

Pop " Tempus asks for waivers on the best of us,
and that Matty and Johnson must in due time
make way for

Youngsters with pep from the Texas Steppe—
The Minors wait for us all.

Yes, you prince of batsmen, who amidst the
bleachers' roar,

Strolled to the plate with your T. Cobb gait,
Hitting .364—

alas, Old Pop Tempus has had his way with you,
too:—

Your Average now is Rancid
And the Pellet you used to maul
In Nineteen O Two has the Sign on you—
The Minors wait for us all.

Not that it matters, of course. The point is to
keep on smiling and unafraid in Bushville as un-
der the Main Tent, always doing one's best.

To swing at the Pill with right good will,
Hitting .164.

This is evidently something more than a sport-
ing page. This is a cosmology.

Will those gentlemen who are in the habit of sneering at professional baseball kindly explain why it is precisely the professional game which has inspired the newspaper poets? Personally I like professional baseball, and for the very reasons why so many persons profess to dislike it. The game is played for money by men who play all the time. They would rather win than lose, but they are not devoured by the passion for victory. They will play with equal zest for Chicago to-day and for Boston to-morrow. But when you say all this you are really asserting what I have discovered to be a fact,—unless Mr. G. K. Chesterton has discovered it before me,—that only in professional sport does the true amateur spirit survive.

By the amateur spirit I mean the spirit which places the game above the victory; which takes joy, though it may be a subdued joy, in the perfect coördination of mind and muscle and nerve; which plays to win because victory is the best available test of ability, but which is all the time aware that life has other interests than the standing of the clubs and the Golf Committee's official handicap. I contend that the man who plays to

live is a better amateur than the man who lives to play. I am not thinking now of the actual amount of time one gives to the game, though even then it might be shown that Mr. Walter J. Travis devotes more hours to golf than Mr. Mathewson devotes to baseball. I am thinking rather of the adjustment of the game to the general scheme of life. It seems to be pretty well established that when your ordinary amateur takes up golf he deteriorates as a citizen, a husband and father; but I cannot imagine Mr. Walter Johnson neglecting his family in his passion for baseball. As between the two, where do you find the true amateur spirit?

I insist. Professional baseball lacks the picturesque and stimulating accessories of an intercollegiate game—the age-old rivalries, the mustering of the classes, the colors, the pretty women, the cheering carried on by young leaders to the verge of apoplexy. But after all, why this Saturnalia of pumped-up emotion over the winning of a game? The winning, it will be observed, and not the playing. Compared with such an exhibition of the lust for victory, a professional game, with its emphasis on the performance and not on the result, comes much nearer to the true heart of the play instinct. An old topic

this, and a perilous one. Before I know it I shall be advocating the obsolete standards of English sport, which would naturally appeal to a duffer. Well, I will take the consequences and boldly assert that there is such a thing as playing too keenly,—even when playing with perfect fairness,—such a thing as bucking the line too hard.

It is distortion of life values. After all, there are things worth breaking your heart to achieve and others that are not worth while. Francis Ouimet's victory over Vardon and Ray is something we are justly proud of; not so much as a display of golf, but as a display of our unrivaled capacity for rallying all the forces of one's being to the needs of the moment; for its display of that grit and nerve on which our civilization has been built so largely. Only observe, Ouimet's victory was magnificent, but it was not play. It was fought in the fierce spirit of the struggle for existence which it is the purpose of play to make us forget. It was Homeric, but who wants baseball or tennis or golf to be Homeric? Herbert Spencer was not merely petulant when he said that to play billiards perfectly argued a misspent life. He stated a profound truth. To play as Ouimet did against Vardon and Ray argues a distortion of the values of life. What shall it

profit us if we win games and lose our sense of the proportion of things? It is immoral.

I think Maurice McLoughlin's hurricane service is immoral. I confess that when McLoughlin soars up from the base line like a combination Mercury and Thor, and pours the entire strength of his lithe, magnificent body through the racket into the ball, it is as beautiful a sight as any of the Greek sculptors have left us. But I cannot share the crowd's delight when McLoughlin's opponent stands helpless before that hurtling, twisting missile of fate. What satisfaction is there in developing a tennis service which nobody can return? The natural advantage which the rules of the game confer on the server ceases to be an advantage and becomes merely a triumph of machinery, even if it is human machinery. A game of tennis which is won on aces is opposed to the very spirit of play. As a matter of fact, the crowd admits this when it applauds a sharp rally over the net, for then it is rejoicing in play, whereas applause for an ace is simply joy in winning. I repeat: McLoughlin making one of his magnificent kills on the return is play; McLoughlin shooting his unreturnable service from the back line is merely a scientific engineer—and nothing is more immoral than scientific management, es-

pecially when applied to anything really worth while in life. Incidentally, a change in the rules of tennis seems unavoidable. The ball, instead of being handed over to McLoughlin for sure destruction, will have to be thrown into the court by the umpire, as in polo.

VI

You will now see why I am so much drawn to the slender young man in blue serge who sits with folded arms and only smiles when Mr. Doyle is caught napping on first. It is because I am convinced that he sees the game as it ought to be seen, —with an intense sympathy and understanding, but, after all, with a sense of humor which recognizes that a great world lies outside the Polo Grounds. You would not think that such a world existed from the way in which the stout young man behind me has been carrying on. It will be recalled that he began by instantly discovering that the visiting pitcher's arm was no good. This discovery he had modified by the end of the fourth inning to the extent that the visiting pitcher now had everything. At the beginning of the ninth inning this revised opinion still held good. The score was 2 to 0 against the home team, and the

stout young man got up in disgust, remarking that he had no use for a bunch of cripples who presumed to go up against a real team.

But he did not go home. He hovered in the aisle, and when the home team, in the second half of the ninth, bunched four hits and won the game, the stout young man hurled himself down the aisle and out upon the field, shrieking madly. But the thin young man in blue serge got to his feet, smiled, made some observation to his neighbor in an undertone, which I failed to catch, and walked away.

V

NIGHT LIFE

THE sun heaves up from its sleeping-place somewhere in the vicinity of Flatbush, an extremely early riser, like most suburban residents, and loses no time in setting out upward and westward to its place of business over Manhattan. But the sun is not the first comer there. Its earliest rays surprise an army at work. Creatures of the night, they cower and dissolve in the oncoming of the light. The yellow glare of their oil torches and the ghastly violet-blue of their vacuum tubes pale, flicker, and go out before the onrush of dawn. It is amazing how a great city can snore with equanimity while entire regiments and squadrons carry on operations in the streets, quietly but with no attempt at concealment, under the very eyes of the police with whom, in fact, they seem to have a complete understanding. No political revolutions in the name of good citizenship, no shifting of Commissioners and Inspectors and Captains, can conceivably

destroy the *entente cordiale* between the police and these workers in the dark. If anything, the patrolman will stop in his rounds to watch their maneuvers with an eye of amicable appraisal, and when they begin to scatter with the dawn from their places of congregation he speeds them on their way with a word of cheer.

And the great city sleeps, its pulse scarcely disturbed by the feverish activity of the army of darkness. Or if the city catches a rumble of their movements and stirs in its slumber, it is only to turn over and go to sleep again. No hypnotic spell will account for this indifference of a city of five millions to the presence of an army in its gas-lit streets. It is merely habit. If here and there in the cubical hives where New York takes its rest an unquiet sleeper tosses in his bed and resents the disturbance, it is not to wish that these prowlers of the night were caught and sent to jail, but only to wish that they went about their business more discreetly—this great host of marketmen, grocers, butchers, milkmen, push-cart engineers, and news vendors who have been engaged since soon after midnight in the enormous task of preparing the city's breakfast.

For this, of course, is the real night life of New York—the life that beats at rapid pace in the

great water-front markets, in the newspaper press-rooms around Brooklyn Bridge, under the acetylene glare over excavations for the new Subways, and in the thousand bakery shops that line the avenues and streets. This is the Underworld of which we speak so little because it is a real underworld. It is not made up of subterranean galleries and shafts inhabited by a race engaged in undermining the upper world. It is a true Underworld on which the upper world of the daylight hours is grounded. The foundations of society run down into the night where the city's food, the city's ways of communication, and the city's news are being made ready and garnished for the full roar of the day's life. Compared with these workers of the dark the operations of the housebreaker and his sister of the shadowy sidewalks sink into insignificance. It is but a turn of the hand for the army of the laborious Underworld to undo the mischief which the outlaws of the night have performed. Between one and five in the morning they create ten thousand times the wealth which it is in the power of the jail-bird to destroy.

The point fascinates me. We need urgently a vindication of the night, and especially of night in the city. Occasionally, it is true, we pay lip

service to Night as the kindly nurse that brings rest to the fevered brow and forgetfulness to the uneasy conscience. But at heart we think of the things of night as of things of evil. It would pay to set to work a commission of moralists, economic experts and statisticians, at striking a balance between the good and evil that are done in the night and the day. Personally I have no doubt at all as to which way the figures would point. It is only a question of how far the day is behind the night in its net contribution to the welfare of humanity. Against night in Greater New York you would have to debit, say, half a hundred burglaries and highway assaults, a handful of fires, a handful of joy-ride fatalities, much gambling and debauchery, and possibly some of the latest plays on Broadway. But from the monetary point of view the wastage and pilferings of the night are a trifle compared to what an active quarter of an hour may show in Wall Street after ten in the morning. And as for the moral laxities of the dark it depends on what you call immorality. Greater harm to the fiber of the race may be wrought during the day by the intrigues of unscrupulous business, by factory fire-traps, by sweat-shops, by the manipulators of our political democracy, than by all the gambling

houses and dives in the Tenderloin. After all, the railroad-wrecking financiers, the get-rich-quick promoters, the builders of jerry tenements, the bank looters, bosses, and ward heelers suspend their labors at night.

No; the more you think of it the more you will be persuaded that night is primarily the time of the innocent industries, and for the most part the primitive industries, employing simple, innocent, primitive men—slow-speaking truck farmers, husky red-faced slaughterers in the abattoirs, solid German bakers, and milkmen. The milkman alone is enough to redeem the night from its undeserved evil reputation. A cartload of pasteurized milk for nurslings at four o'clock in the morning represents more service to civilization than a cartful of bullion on its way from the Sub-treasury to the vaults of a national bank five hours later.

I am, of course, not thinking now of the early part of the night on Broadway, which is only the bedraggled fringe of day, but of the later half of night which is the fresh anticipation of the dawn. In the still coolness before daybreak the interests of the city come down to human essentials. The commodities dealt in are those that men bought and sold tens of thousands of years

before they trafficked in safety-razors and Brazilian diamonds. The dealers of the night are concerned with bread, flesh, milk, butter, cheese, fruits, and the green offerings of the fields. Contact with these things cannot but keep the soul clean. There is a fortune for the nerve specialist who will first advise his patients to rise at three in the morning and walk a mile between the rows of wagons and stalls in Gansevoort or Wallabout Market and draw strength from the piles of sweet green produce dewy under the lamp-light, and learn patience from the farmer's horses, and observe that even men in their chafferings can be subdued to the innocent medium in which they traffic.

To be sure there are the newspaper men. I have always assumed that it is primarily for them the churches in the lower part of the city offer special services for night-workers. If any class of night-workers stands in need of prayer it must be the men of my own profession, surely the least innocent of all legitimate trades that are plied after midnight. But as I think of it, even among newspaper men it is the comparatively unspoiled and innocent who work after midnight, members of the lobster squad left on emergency duty, cubs who have not lost all the freshness of the little

towns in the Middle West and the South, the men on the linotype machines, the men sweating in the press-rooms, and the short, squat unshaven men who stagger under enormous bundles of newspapers to the cars and the elevated trains. Here, too, night has exercised its cleansing selective effect. The big men of the press, the shrewd manipulators of newspaper policy, the editorial pleaders of doubtful causes, the city editors with insistence on the "punch" as against the fact, the Titans of the advertising columns, have all gone home before midnight. As I think of it, the only unrespectable members of the newspaper profession that work at 2 A.M. are the writers of the Extra Special afternoon editions for the next day. Let us hope that they take advantage of the churches' standing offer of special services and prayer for night-workers.

When you stroll through the markets, between rows of wagons, stalls, crates, baskets, and squads of perspiring men, you need not force the imagination to call up the solid square miles of brick and stone barracks in which New York's five million, minus some thousands, are asleep, outside the glare of the arc lights and kerosene torches. You can tell Hercules from his foot and you can tell New York from the size of its maw,

of which a single day's filling keeps these thousands of men at work. There it sleeps, the big, dark brute, and in another three hours it will yawn and sit up and blink its eyes and roar for its food. The markets are only the spots of highest activity in the business of providing fodder for the creature. Turn out of the crush of Gansevoort Market and walk south through Washington Street and Greenwich Street and Hudson Street, a good mile and a half south through silent warehouses all crammed with food, a solid square mile of provender. The contents of these grim weather-beaten storehouses are open to appraisal by the mere sense of smell as you pass through successive strata of coffee, and sugar, and tea, and spices, and green vegetables, and fruits. If you are sufficiently educated you may detect the individual species within the genus, discern where the pepper merges into cloves, and the heavy odor of banana into the acid aroma of the citrus. It seems almost indecent, this vast debauch of gluttony, this great area given up to the most elemental of the appetites, this Tenderloin of the stomach, until you once more recall the five million individual cells of the animal that will soon have to be fed.

The markets and the warehouses are not the

belly of the city, as Zola has called them in his own Paris. The digestive processes of a great city are worked out later and in a million homes. The markets are the heart of the city, pumping the life-fuel to themselves from across the rivers and the seas, and pumping them out again by drayloads and cartloads through the avenues and streets. In the late afternoon of the day before, everywhere on the circumference of the city, you have come across the dribblets and streamlets of nourishment which the markets suck to themselves. In Jersey, in Long Island, and in Westchester you encounter, toward nightfall, heavy farm-wagons of exactly the prairie-schooner type that you first met in the school histories, plodding on toward the ferries and the bridges, the drivers nodding over the reins, the horses philosophically conscious of the long hours as well as the long miles ahead of them. Taken one by one, these farmer's wagons moving at two miles an hour seem pitifully inadequate to the appetites and imperious demands of a metropolis. But they are only the unquestioning units in the great mobilization of the army of food providers. Their cubic contents and their rate of progress have been accurately estimated by the Von Moltkes of the provision markets. At the appointed time

they will drop into their appointed place, forming by companies and squadrons into hollow squares for the daily encounter with humanity's oldest and most indefatigable foe—hunger.

The markets on the water-front are the heart of the city's night life, but in all the five boroughs there are local centers of concentrated vitality—the milk depots, the street-railway junctions, the car barns. Where Elevated or Subway meets with Crosstown and longitudinal surface lines you will find at three in the morning as active and garishly illuminated a civic center as many a city of the hinterland would boast of at nine o'clock in the evening. Groups of switchmen, car dispatchers, conductors, motormen, and the casual onlooker whom New York supplies from its inexhaustible womb even at three in the morning, stand in the middle of the road and discuss the most wonderful mysteries—so it seems at least in the hush before dawn. And because the cars which they switch and side track and dispatch on their way depart empty of passengers and lose themselves in the shadows, their business, too, seems one of impressive mystery.

A car conductor at three o'clock in the morning is the most delightful of people to meet. His hands are not yet grimy with the filth of alien

nickels and dimes. His temper is as yet unworn with the day's traffic. In the beneficent cool of the night his thwarted social instincts unfold. If you share the rear platform with him, which you will do as a rule, he will accept your fare with a deprecating smile as money passes between gentlemen who stoop to the painful necessity but take no notice of it. Having registered your fare, he will engage you in conversation, and it is amazing how the harassed soul of the car conductor is open to the ideas and forces that rule the great world. If you are timid with conductors and take your way into the car after paying your fare, he will make a pretense of business with the motorman and, coming back, he will find a remark to draw you out of your surliness or your timidity. He may even sit down next to you and after five minutes you will be cursing the mechanical necessity of the daylight life which takes this eminently human creature and turns him into a bundle of rasping hurry and incivility. If a visit to the markets is a good cure for neurosis, a trip down Amsterdam Avenue in a surface car at three A.M. is a splendid tonic for democracy.

And once more food. For the men who labor in the night, primarily for the city's breakfast, must themselves be fed. Clustered around the markets,

and around the railway junctions and car barns, are the brilliantly illuminated Shanleys and Delmonicos of the industrious Underworld. What places of warm cheer they are, on a winter night, these long rows of Lunches, whose names are a perpetual lesson in the national geography—Baltimore Lunch, Hartford Lunch, Washington Lunch, New Orleans and Memphis and Utica and Milwaukee Lunches. They all have tiled floors and white walls and spacious arm-chairs with a table extension like the chairs in which we used to write examination papers at college. In the rear of the room is the counter supporting the great silver coffee-urn. The placards on the walls reek with plenty. You wonder how the resources of an establishment operating on an average level of fifteen cents the meal can supply the promised bounty—sirloins and small steaks, and shellfish out of season and all the delicacies of the griddle and the casserole;—only the prudent consumer will concentrate on the coffee and doughnuts. The rarities are to be had, if you insist, and who would quarrel with the quality of a sirloin steak selling for twenty cents with bread, butter, and coffee, at three in the morning? But it is better to ask for coffee and doughnuts.

An affable humanism permeates the Baltimore

Lunch. The proprietor, the chef, the waiter, and the cashier will come forward to meet you and exchange a word or two with you as he wipes up the arm-table. He will take your order, and going behind the counter, will deliver it to himself. If you are extravagant and ask for meats, he will disappear into some sort of cupboard, which is a kitchen, and pleasant pungent odors will precede his reappearance. He will punch your check as a protection against malfeasance by the waiter and he will ring up your payment on the cash-register as a protection against malfeasance on the part of the cashier. If your manners permit he will come forward and watch you while you eat, not with the affected paternal mien of the head waiter at the Waldorf, but as a brother, a democrat, and a chef who has presided over your food from the first moment till the last and is qualified to take an intimate interest in its ultimate disposal. He is generous with the butter, and as a rule he is indifferent to tips.

Can I do you justice, oh Baltimore Lunchman of the Gay White Way in the vicinity of Broadway and Manhattan Streets, where the enormous black iron span of the Subway viaduct casts its shadow over all the cars that run west to Fort Lee and north to Fort George and south into the

deserted regions of lower Broadway? Your napkins unquestionably were white once upon a time, and your apron is but so-so, but your heart is in the right place, and consequently your manners are perfect. On you, too, the night has exercised its cleansing effect, wiping out commercialism and leaving behind the instinct for service. You accept my money, but only that you may have the means to go on feeding the useful toilers of the night and occasional castaways like myself. The spirit of profit does not lurk under your flaring arc lights; where is the profit in sirloin steak with bread, butter, and coffee at twenty cents? You are not a trafficker in food, but a minister to human needs, almost as disinterested as the dogs of St. Bernard, of whom, if you don't mind my saying so, you strongly remind me, with your solid bulk and great shock of hair and the two days' beard and your strangely unmanicured fingers. You do not cater to the pampered palate of the rich, which lusts for strange plants and strange animals and strange liquids to devour. Your sizzling coffee is nectar in the veins of big men who run in on winter nights stamping their feet and smiting their palms stiff from the icy brake-handle and switching-lever—the simple, innocent toilers of the night. Occasionally your

walls resound to the gayety of young voices and your arc lights glow on the shimmer of linen and silks which put your regular customers somewhat out of countenance, as when a troop of young men and girls after loitering wickedly at the dance seek refuge with you while waiting for a car. They taste your coffee and nibble at your doughnuts for a lark. So they say. It is pretense. They do not nibble, they do not taste; they eat and drink with undeniable relish the rough, unfamiliar fare. After five hours' exercise on the dancing floor and a ten minutes' wait on a wintry corner there is an electric spark in your coffee and Titan's food in your doughnuts. Motormen, draymen, young men and women in dancing pumps, what a line of customers is yours! Oh Youth! Oh Night! Oh Baltimore Lunchman!

The gray of dawn overtakes the armies from the markets, the car barns, and the excavation pits in full retreat. They scatter in every direction, weary, heavy-eyed, but with no sense of defeat in their souls. They throng to the river to lose themselves in the mysterious wilds of Jersey. Their cavalry and train rumble down empty Broadway to South Ferry. They pour eastward toward the bridges or hide themselves in the cellars and ramshackle corner booths of the East side. They

plunge into the Subway and, stretched out at full length in the illuminated spaciousness of the Interborough's cars, they pass off into the sleep which falls alike upon the just and the unjust, contrary to general supposition. When the day breaks it finds their haunting-places deserted or given over to small brigades of sweepers and cleaners who make ready for the other kinds of business that are carried on in the full glare of the sun.

Blessed are the meek! While waiting for the inheritance of the earth they are already in full possession of the glory of the sunrise, which we of the comfortable classes know only by hearsay. The tremulous milky gray of the firmament followed by the red flush of daylight is reserved in New York for the truck farmer from the suburbs, the drayman, the food vendors, and the early factory hands. For them only is the beauty of New York as it heaves up out of the shadows. The farmer who has disposed of his wares with expedition and is now on his way back to the Jersey shore, when he looks back, sees the jagged silhouette of our towers and massed brick piles like a host of negroid Titans plodding northward in retreat. Or if his way is by the Municipal boats to Staten Island, he may look back and see a thin

shaft of light, ethereal, tremulous, almost of faëry, and that pillar of light will be Broadway canyon between its brick walls still clad in shadow. It is given only to the foreign-born ditchers and hewers of the crowded lower Bronx, as they trudge across the bridges over the Harlem, to see before them mighty iron spans flung forward into the shadows or to catch the mirrored sweep of magic arches lifting up out of the water to link themselves to the arch overhead.

The beauty of New York, rising to meet a new day, is for these lowly workers, and for the unfortunates who stay out in the night not to work, but to sleep, because night and the open is their only refuge. When the curtain of night rises on Riverside and reveals Grant's Tomb in frosty vagueness at the end of a green vista, the sight is rarely for those who sleep in the expensive caravansaries along the Drive, and most often for the sleepers on the benches. It is the men who sleep on the benches in Morningside Park that are the first to wonder at the dark line of poplars holding desperate defense against the charging line of daylight, and over the poplars the huge, squat octagon of St. John's buttressed chapels; unless the sleepers on the benches are anticipated by the angel atop of St. John's greeting the dawn

with his trumpet. Because night loiterers are excluded from Central Park, I suppose that all its awakening loveliness must go for naught. But if the first impingement of the sun on the massed verdure of the park, on its lakes, its Alpine views, its waterfalls, and the fresh, sweet meadows, does find a rare spectator, it must be again one of the homeless who has eluded police regulations to find a night's rest in the great green inclosure. Possibly there may be a poet or two wandering about in Central Park at dawn, but the poets are early risers only in the country. To them the city is only the monstrous, noisy machine of the full day. That on New York City, too, the sun rises in the morning, working its miracles of beauty, seems to have escaped the poets; or else they have escaped me.

As the sun continues to mount from Flatbush towards the East River bridges, the demoralization of the hosts of night-workers grows complete. Either they have disappeared or they straggle on through isolated streets, mere units, like the flotsam of a beaten army. The full light strips them of their dignity. As late even as five o'clock, the milkman in the quiet streets is a symbol and a mystery. By six o'clock he is a common purveyor. Contact with frowsy elevator

boys and gaping grocer's clerks has vulgarized him. His interests are no longer in food, but in commerce. Instead of communing with the night, he is busy with a memorandum book and a lead pencil.

In the full dawn the acetylene flares over the excavation pits have gone out. The dazzling arc lights in the Baltimore and Hartford Lunches are out. The street cars, running on shorter schedules, have taken on their daylight screech and clangor. The conductor is fast sinking into daylight surliness. The huge bundles of newspapers which at night and in bulk have the merit of a really great commodity, the dignity almost of a bag of meal or a crate of eggs, are now resolved into units on the stationers' stands, and if the new day be Sunday the newsman is busy sorting out the twelve different sections of the Sunday paper and putting the comic section on top. Nor can I think of anything in human affairs which can be more futile in the eyes of a Creator than a stationer sorting out comic supplements in the full glory of early sunrise. With its newspaper waiting for it, New York of the ordinary life is ready to get out of bed.

VI

LAURELMERE IN PEACE AND WAR

I

TEN months in the year we sleep, eat, and receive our friends in Belshazzar Court. But if home is where the heart is, our apartment stands vacant seven months of the twelve. With the first thrill of the March sunlight come dreams of the sea, green fields, the hills, and by the first week in April we are planning vacations. The spring rains sap and mine at the foundations of Belshazzar Court's superheated comfort. Like every one of the fifty-three other families who have been snuggling together against the winter, we feel less need of our neighbors as the days grow warmer and we yield to the gentle *Weltschmerz* which seeks expression in real estate catalogues. The hallways in Belshazzar Court grow stuffy, the bedrooms shrink and darken, and stray conversation from across the court no longer wakens the response of human fellowship.

In winter Belshazzar Court is an admirable two minutes from the Subway, but in April I begin to feel that a ten minutes' walk to the train in the morning is just what my health requires. To get away, away—*Weltschmerz*, *Wanderlust*, or any other term of gentle, surging emotion the Kaiser's language is so rich in. We go in for real estate catalogues, time-tables, commutation fares, and the local distribution of malaria and mosquitoes in the northeastern United States.

We go away in July. We come back in September, but only in the body. It is another four weeks before Belshazzar Court becomes home again. The apartment shows traces of the painters and the paper-hangers. The family wardrobe is in transit from trunks to closets. Emmeline haunts the employment offices. Harold must be fitted out for school. The bedroom distribution problem must be settled and cannot be properly settled until Harold's bed has been tried out in every sleeping-room and brought back to its original place. Not till some time in October does life fall back into the compact, steam-heated ways of Belshazzar Court. Not till then does the spirit rejoin the body and take up its old habitation. There ought to be such a thing as spiritual rent, payable only during those months when our souls

are at peace in Belshazzar Court. Nobody then would want to be a landlord and everyone would be happy.

This summer we decided early against hotels and boarding-houses. Emmeline's nerves are not equipped for the strain of porch life. The children find the noise rather trying. And the vast amount of work which I plan for my summer vacation and which regularly gets postponed to Christmas could not conceivably be carried on in hotel writing-rooms. We decided then that this summer it must be a place of our own in the country, though we would take our meals outside. It must be within commuting distance. When I must go back to the office I could still come out every night and so spare the children, who have grown used to having me all the time, the sharp pang of separation which they always experience on such occasions until I turn the corner. A place of our own at the shore, with trees and grass, with a porch, with first-class train service, and costing much less than a hotel would—that is all we asked.

At Laurelmere-by-the-Sea we found everything we wanted—except the scale of expenditure, which naturally cannot be ascertained until accounts are checked up at the end of the summer.

And we found it almost at the first venture. From the street the house looked but so-so. But at the back of the house, one flight up, there was a porch as large as our big bedroom in Belshazzar Court, screened from all observation by lattice-work, by thick matted vines, and a willow-tree, which stood sentinel guard right in the middle and brushed its lower branches against the porch railing. The porch looked down on a garden with hedges and over the trees there was a blue line on the horizon edged with white lace, which was the sea. As we stood there on the porch, and the renting agent was presumably wondering how much he could ask, there slid over the blue line of the sea a boat with white sails, with the rigid, swanlike motion of a stage boat propelled by a gang of expert scene shifters. I don't know whether the renting agent had a signal system by which a magic boat with white sails could be made to glide by just as a prospective tenant stepped out on the back porch. There was nothing more to be said. We rented the porch with its accessory rooms, and two weeks later we were in residence at Laurelmere. It remained only to hire a bathhouse, a beach chair, and a yellow umbrella. Our vacation—and simultaneously my own vacation from the office—began with a swing.

It is not my intention to give a formal account of our experience by the sea. For that matter any academic picture of a summer outing must be a failure. Fugitive impressions are best. I set down the following disjointed notes just as they were put to paper, with no attempt at system and elaboration:—

July 14.

Yesterday I tipped the bathhouse attendant and this morning I found a new man on our aisle. Last Saturday we tipped the grocer's boy and the afternoon of the same day he resigned. Last week I gave the waitress at the hotel a handsome fee to insure for ourselves the favored-nation treatment for an indefinite future, and the very next day Harold developed mumps and we have been taking our meals at home. On the subject of tips Emmeline disagrees with Machiavelli, who says that men are actuated by the expectation of favors to come rather than by gratitude for favors in the past. Emmeline says always tip in advance; but the facts are against her.

My experience with waiters, janitors, and bathhouse attendants has always been the same. Why do they resign after a generous gratuity? It cannot be that they take it as an insult. Some-

times I have suspected that they resign in order to give someone else a chance at me. Or else my tip just rounds out the amount of capital on which they can afford to retire or go into business for themselves. Perhaps, again, it is only the *Wanderlust* which is so strong in the servitor class. The man at the bathing pavilion is still in business three aisles further on, and the grocer's boy is working for another grocer half a block away. It would be an interesting experiment to follow up a grocer's boy or a janitor who resigns after being tipped. We could transfer our marketing or our living-quarters to the place of his new employment, and so doggedly pursue him with tips until he turned upon us in desperation, declaring millions for defense, but not a cent for tribute. At any rate, here is a suggestion I throw out for the psychologists. Whenever you encounter a problem that is too difficult or of no particular importance, throw it out as a suggestion for someone else to work out.

July 16.

The theatrical season here is in full blast. Our taste runs strongly to the educational drama. At the Bijou we have Dolly Devereux and her Red-head Aeroplane Girls. At the Twentieth Cen-

tury we have a white-slave film in four reels, with a condensed version in two reels at the half-price afternoon performances for children. Our stock company is drawing crowded houses to *The Lure*, which the dramatic reviewer on the local weekly has aptly characterized as the most soul-racking drama ever written for the purposes of a refined evening's entertainment. There is obviously no reason why people spending their holidays on this unequalled section of the Atlantic Coast should be allowed to forget the grimmer aspects of life. As the reviewer for the local paper cleverly remarks, the sense of human fellowship is as strong on Long Island as in the White Mountains or the Maine woods. On this point it is instructive to listen to comments from the audience as it leaves the theater after a performance of this pioneer educational drama of the Underworld:

“It was chilly, but once you got into the water it was awfully warm. The sea, you know, is always warmer than the air.”

“Isn't it terrible that such things should be allowed?”

“I prefer a voile; it doesn't wrinkle.”

The Wednesday matinées are well attended. As the dramatic reviewer for our paper observes, after a performance of *The Lure*, the visitor will

find a dip in the sea a delightful way of rounding out the afternoon and preparing for dinner.

July 17.

Now that Huerta is out we are chiefly interested in how to pronounce "maxixe." I represent the conservative wing which pronounces it "macksikes," my attitude on all such questions having been determined years ago when I learned from Professor Woodberry to speak of the melancholy Jayqueeze and the Seven Ages of Man. The moderates of the Center pronounce it "machéeche." The adherents of the Extreme Left pronounce it anywhere from "machoochee" to "maxeexeh," the "eh" in the latter form representing the suspended and prolonged catch of the breath with which French tragediennes pronounce all final e's, a method in vogue with graduates of the Misses Ely's school of Stratford atte Bowe. We have several Theatres of Danse, one Garden of Danse, and many minor Galleries and Trianons of Danse, at all of which there is dancing afternoons and evenings.

In the drug stores there are stamp machines which sell four penny stamps for a nickel. I don't know who makes the profit, the Government, the patentee of the machine, or the storekeeper.

But a superprofit of twenty-five per cent. strikes me as exorbitant. Doesn't this reveal the secret of the high cost of living? Say that the average young woman on her vacation sends out fifty picture postcards a day; that represents an excess charge of twelve and a half cents a day, or one dollar and seventy-five cents during the fortnight. This considerable saving could be effected by buying stamps in large quantities at the post office, say in sheets of one hundred. All one has to do then, when a postcard is to be mailed, is to turn out every drawer in one's room and sundry pockets. With some care the stamps can be glued apart and they are practically as good as new.

July 19.

Harold has not been bathing as yet on account of the rain and the mumps. While his face was still badly swollen he prayed to be allowed to go swimming in the rain, but was persuaded not to. He contented himself with describing the prodigious feats he would accomplish in the surf, though I extracted from him the promise that he would not venture beyond the lifelines. Since the swelling on his cheek has subsided and the warm weather has come in Harold has been reticent on the subject of the water and prefers to play tennis

in the back garden. Once or twice he has asked whether it is essential to get one's hair wet when bathing.

July 20.

The number of young men this summer is below the ordinary level. A fair estimate of the crop would be 2.3 per cent. as against an average of 4.5 per cent. for the preceding ten years; this not only in spite of but because of the heavy rains. Where the young men appear they are immediately taken up. Two young men arrived at the hotel across the street, one morning about ten. At 12.15 they were carrying sand cushions and wraps for two extremely attractive school teachers from Brooklyn. I don't know whether the scarcity of young men is due to the prevailing economic depression or whether it is the familiar phenomenon bewailed by young women at the shore that young men this year go to the mountains, and by young women in the mountains that young men go to the shore. This does not explain everything, as it would apparently leave the young men in a condition like Mohammed's coffin suspended between the mountains and the sea.

One result of the scarcity of young men is a corresponding increase in the hauteur of the life-

guards. Whereas in ordinary years one of these semi-nude Apollos will pose an average of ten minutes with folded arms and corrugated brows bent upon the sea, this year by actual timing they will pose twenty minutes at a stretch.

July 23.

In a reclining arm-chair under a large umbrella at the edge of the sea, Bernard Shaw's last volume of plays is ideal. When you pick up *Misalliance*, with a preface on "Parents and Children," and look across to where the outer bar is just covered with a filmy lacework of foam, you realize for the first time that summer reading is not a question of heavy books or light books, but whether the pages are cut or not. For a man in the very front rank of advanced thought Bernard Shaw reveals one striking reactionary trait: his books cannot be read without a paper-cutter. Yet even in his old-fashioned survivals Shaw is himself. The pages of *Misalliance* are not pasted at the top, or at the top and side, as they used to be in Victorian days, but exclusively at the bottom. To a true Shavian there may be an inner meaning in this peculiarity of the binder's art. A true Shavian will not grudge the extra effort of slicing open the pages, even if one has to borrow a child's

sand spade for the purpose. But one who is not completely of the faith sometimes shrinks from the task.

Especially if he looks up and finds the outer bar completely submerged and the waves lapping nearer on the sands. There is no breeze. There is no swell in the channel between the main shore and the reef, and diminutive sailing craft with lowered canvas glide by under motor power. An army under yellow and green umbrellas is encamped on the sands. Regiments of engineers ranging in age from three to seven are throwing up elaborate fortifications and planting the national banner on the escarpment. Regiments of sappers and miners drive tunnels under these fortifications and are frequently buried under the ruins. The younger engineers, say from three to five, have a curious habit of neglecting the material on the spot and fetching their sand from a distance of twenty feet between their fingers. I don't know why, but they make one think of Shaw. You pick up the volume on your knee.

And then it occurs to you that in order to do justice to *Misalliance*, is it absolutely necessary to cut the pages? For one thing you may hold the uncut pages apart at the top with two fingers and peer down. It is rather a strain on the eyes,

but it can be done. I have done it several times, and it struck me that it may have all been intentional on Shaw's part. With superb confidence he set himself to testing the devotion of his admirers, and his own power to interest. In that drowsy air, with the warm sun on the sands and the orchestral murmur of the incoming waters, what other writer of our day would dare impose upon his readers the alternative of getting out of the chair and borrowing a shovel, or holding the pages apart with two fingers and peering down? The latter process is difficult. Halfway down the page you are buried, eyes, nose, and chin, between the pages, and the lines toward the bottom of the page necessitate a combined downward and side thrust of the head which is both unæsthetic and bad for the muscles of the neck. The gray-blue of the water, the sunlight shimmering through the yellow umbrella covering, the great peace of the shore, come home to you with peculiar force after you have extracted your face from between the pages of *Misalliance*, and let your neck sway back to the perpendicular.

But why peep? Bernard Shaw's supreme qualification for summer reading lies precisely in the fact that it is neither necessary to cut his pages nor peer between them. Sometimes I do neither,

and I find that I have grasped Shaw's message as clearly in this book as I have done in any of his books with a paper-knife at hand. His wit, his paradox, his sudden and brilliant generalization, carry me over the gulf of a couple of untouched pages without the least sense of traveling through empty space. There can be no feeling of jar in passing from page 29 to page 32 in Shaw's dialogue, because the person who is speaking at the bottom of page 29 and the person who is speaking at the top of page 32 have no perceptible human difference. Actually I can recall that some of the most illuminating truths in Bernard Shaw have come to me just in this way—by turning unknowingly from page 29 to page 32.

Clouds are masking the sun and turning the gray-blue of the water into steel gray and dull lead. A breeze has sprung up and it frets the surface of the channel. Diminutive catboats throw up sail and glide by no longer on an even keel. Engineers, sappers, and miners are being huddled into baby carts and dragged off protesting to lunch. The life-guard, gray woolen sweater and brown slim legs, looks more than ever the Superman. Here's the book again.

It must be the secret of the entire contemporary school of paradox, of whimsy, of individ-

ualistic standards in literature, that it appeals to a time-saving age by creating books that can be read without cutting the pages. For instance, when the book reviewer says of a book that it contradicts itself, but so does life contradict itself; that the author does not prove his point, but Nature never bothers about demonstrating anything; that his grammar is a bit rough, but so was Shakespeare's—when a reviewer says all this of an author it is obvious that this author can afford to have his pages pasted in couples or in fours. He will be just as consecutive as ever. Such an author may be read the way old textbooks were intended to be read, with the big type for everyone, with footnotes in smaller type for the closer student, with appendices for the specialist. For the extremely frivolous reader, Bernard Shaw might come pasted eight pages together; for the more serious reader like myself, two together, and so on.

The idea fascinates me. I imagine myself beginning a new play of Shaw's by reading every eighth page, and returning for a closer grapple with his meaning on every fourth page, and so on till all the pages were cut. I imagine myself writing a little essay in appreciation of *Fanny's First Play* based on this kind of research. I call up a

picture of the Shaw of pages 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, etc., a fierce, mocking, biting spirit at war with the world as it is to-day, and then I compare it with the Shaw of pages 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, etc., a shrewd, practical student of human nature, keenly aware of its limitations, and generous to our human frailties. The combinations are infinite. One can always compare the Shaw of pages 1, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 12, 16, with the Shaw of pages 2, 3, 4, 6, 9, 13, 14, 15. By refusing to make use of a paper-cutter I could wring out the very heart of Shaw's secret here in this chair by the edge of the sea.

II

My vacation from the office was a success. It would have been a complete success if Harold had not brought the germ of mumps with him from the city and passed it on to the baby. After that we had peace, such perfect peace that I longed for the time when I must get back to the city. It seemed unmanly, it seemed abominably anti-social to be lounging there, a big man in full possession of his strength, between the beach and the porch hammock while fifty minutes away, in the city, four million men and women were sweating to pile up the wealth that kept me in idleness.

I came back to the office the day the Kaiser's troops appeared before Liège. I do not imply any connection between the two events. I am not even trying to point out a coincidence. What I mean is that henceforth the morning papers became magic literature, and the fifty minutes' ride from Laurelmere was hardly long enough. Thus the war in Europe made easy my initiation as a commuter. Coming into town and going out we read war on the train or talked war. I began to form habits. I made acquaintances. There were the men who came in on the 7.57 and those who came in on the 8.17. There were the men who went out on the 5.02 and those who went out on the 5.40. Don't imagine that I am going to draw any subtle psychological comparisons between the 7.57 type of man and the 8.17 type, or between the 5.02 type and the 5.40 type. As a matter of fact, the men who came in on the 8.17 were mostly men who had just missed the 7.57, and so in the evening.

On all trains we talked war,—that is, after we had exchanged notes on the temperature of the water in the sea the night before. On the trains I listen better than I talk, and often I was a poor listener; but I would let my eyes rest on the quiet bay, a marsh at low tide, a lovely inland sea at

high, and my thoughts would wander away from my companions, but not away from the war. The tread of the Kaiser's battalions was heavy on my soul.

One day it took Williams, who sometimes comes out with me on the 5.02, exactly twenty-seven minutes by the watch to destroy the German Empire and reconstruct the map of Europe. We were still in Flatbush Avenue when Williams began an irresistible advance against the right wing of the Kaiser's troops in Belgium. Before we reached Nostrand Avenue he was pursuing the demoralized German legions right off the top of the afternoon newspaper on which he had drawn his field of operations with a pencil which he borrowed from me and failed to return. After that it was a simple matter for Williams to outflank the German right wing in Alsace and hurl it back in confusion off the right-hand edge of his newspaper in the general direction of Berlin. The mortality was appalling, but no humane considerations could be allowed to stand in the way of Field Marshal Williams's resolve to swing a complete circle around the German armies of the center and force them to lay down their arms. This he accomplished while we were held up in the tunnel this side of East New York and the lights went out. The

incident did not interfere in the least with his conduct of operations. Like a great commander he seized upon opportunity and turned it to his advantage. When the lights were switched on the Allies had drawn an iron ring around the German forces and were negotiating the terms of capitulation. Williams had delivered his master stroke under cover of the dark.

"It couldn't have been done without wireless," said Williams, and he passed on to his second move.

But I was not listening. I was thinking of wireless. Not the witches' dance of Marconi, De Forest, Telefunken, which broke loose in the atmosphere over three oceans and several inland seas from the moment that England took her stand at Armageddon; admiralty towers and flagships snapping out commands; timorous liners, only the other day queens of the seas, now whimpering to cruisers for help; cruisers flashing curt reassurance; code, laden with the destiny of nations, sharing the impartial air with obvious newspaper lies from a dozen capitals; wireless waves zigzagging from coast to coast, crossing, colliding—an electric Walpurgis Night symbolizing the Triumph of Science and Civilization—I meant none of these.

I was thinking of a much more rarefied wireless than Marconi can contemplate—the clash and confusion of the prayers of the nations, winging their way through the ether to the Throne of Grace, imploring divine assistance in the work of murder for which they had girded themselves. Prayers in German, prayers in English, prayers in French and Latin, prayers in Russian, Old Slavonian, Magyar, Serb, Flemish, Japanese—and who knows at this time of writing?—prayers in Italian, Turkish, Bulgarian, Dutch, Scandinavian—the prayers of all the Great Powers and the smaller powers storming up to One whom in their sacred books they consent to call the greatest power of all; calling for victory, which is the code word for enemies slaughtered.

Only a divine intelligence could conceivably keep its bearing in this hurly-burly of the S. O. S. litanies of the peoples. Only a divine fortitude could endure it. It is hard enough for the human father when a brood of hungry children clamor for bread and there is no bread to give. But what man was ever called upon to decide among a pack of children clamoring for each other's destruction?

I have set down what I remember of the main outlines of Williams's strategy. I have only the

vaguest recollections. Of the tactical details by which he won the greatest victory recorded in the history of the Long Island Railroad I do remember this much: whenever the Germans were confronted by a river Williams compelled them to throw pontoon bridges across it under the withering fire of the Allies and they perished by the thousands. Whereas all the rivers that the Allies were under the necessity of crossing shrank in size and depth so as to be easily forded. If it was a particularly large stream that stood in the way of the advance of the victorious Allies, Williams looked thoughtful for a moment and then erased it with the rubber on my pencil. The German airships were of no avail. Without the least compunction Williams flung a couple of French aeroplanes against the Kaiser's Zeppelins and the proud battleships of the empyrean blew up. Sometimes the French aviator was carried along to destruction, but most often he volplaned to the ground within his own lines. The German resistance crumpled up before the Allies because the Kaiser's troops were all Socialists and frequently refused to obey their officers. Nevertheless the great enveloping movement of the Allies might have failed after all if the heart had not been taken out of the German Army by an attack

from the rear executed by a powerful British fleet which Admiral Williams sent up the Rhine. This last move, I believe, was a sudden inspiration which came to Williams as we were crossing the trestle over Jamaica Bay and he looked out of the window and saw fishermen in flatboats dozing over their lines. The same sight flung my thoughts far from Williams for the moment.

It occurred to me that the disadvantages of believing in one single ruler of the universe must be painfully present to the war lords and the cabinet ministers and the bishops, archbishops and patriarchs when they prepare to go to war. In Parliament and before their congregations they maintain, of course, that Providence is on their side. But in their heart of hearts they must sometimes have their doubts. They must wonder if the Power whom they claim as an Ally may not turn out to be only a Judge. For the purposes of war, paganism has an enormous advantage over belief in one God. What a nation needs when it is preparing to kill more of its neighbors than its neighbors can kill of its own citizens is a tribal god upon whom it can count for undivided attention and sympathy. Berlin could then address its petitions to Moloch, Paris to Beelzebub, London to Dagon or Neptune, Rome to Ashtoreth,

with utter confidence and with no danger of confusion.

For obviously there must be confusion when many nations, professing the same creed, are compelled to use very much the same formulas of prayer, inserting only the respective name of the country and its ruler. A private tribal god upon whose exclusive services the war leaders might count, a private book of prayer embodying the really important facts to be brought to the attention of the tribal god—that is the ideal to which the nations of Europe in arms ought to strive.

Decidedly that is the idea. No general forms of prayer, but England, submitting its case to Dagon, would use its own litany, the Chief Priest of Oxbury intoning:

“Iron Duke—25,000 tons—ten 13.5-inch guns—22 knots.

“Warspite—27,500 tons—eight 15-inch guns—25 knots.

“Valiant—27,500 tons—eight 15-inch guns—25 knots.

“Audacious—23,000 tons—ten 13.5-inch guns—21 knots.

“Thunderer—22,500 tons—ten 13.5-inch guns—20.8 knots.”

And the choir might declaim the supplementary exhortations—the smaller battleships, the armored cruisers, the light cruisers, the torpedo-boats and destroyers and submarines; and the congregation could join in the final appeal:

“Five Hundred and Seventy-nine Warships, Two Million One Hundred and Sixty-five Thousand Six Hundred and Seventy-two Tons!”

And so Germany might cast into imposing forms of prayer her twenty-six army corps, her first reserves, her Landwehr, her Landsturm; France her admirable batteries of quick-firing guns; Russia her millions of peasants between the ages of twenty and forty-five—all cast in statistical, practical shape as befits a nation speaking to its tribal god who is also its chief of staff.

Or shall we say that Christianity is like the neutrality of Belgium, which is guaranteed by all the nations and inviolate in times of peace, but which must not be allowed to stand in the way of the interests of a people on the road to great things? Here again I am impelled to point out the advantages of paganism and the system of tribal gods. Take the most practical people of antiquity, the Romans, and see how admirably the system worked with them. They had a tribal god whom they called Janus, and whenever the Ro-

mans were at war the doors of the temple of Janus stood open. In times of peace the doors were closed. A thoroughly unsentimental people the Romans; when they needed the help of their tribal god, they opened the doors and addressed their invocations to him. When peace came and they felt that they could dispense with his protection, they closed the doors upon him and went about their business.

I asked Williams why he was so bitter against the Germans and he said that he regarded them—and especially the Kaiser—as enemies of civilization. He also mentioned Belgian neutrality and the balance of power and pointed out the danger of universal militarism if Germany should win. But I said it seemed to me that if Germany were to lose she would immediately set to work to build up a bigger army than ever and wait for the day of revenge, just as France had waited more than forty years. I said that the real way to bring about the end of militarism was for Germany to beat the world virtually single-handed. The other nations would then give up the hopeless job of competing with Germany and the Kaiser could reduce the size of his own army.

Whereupon Williams, putting my pencil into his own pocket, declared that the Germans needed

a licking badly; that it was long coming to them, and that now they were going to get it good and plenty. That clarified the situation at once. For I could not help feeling that Williams in less than a minute had touched the heart of a question which thousands of editorials in the course of a month had failed to reach. If Williams so ruthlessly played havoc with the Kaiser's Zeppelins and pursued the German battalions to the very gates of Berlin, it was not because of militarism, or Slav against Teuton, or the control of the seas, but because he disliked the Kaiser and his Empire.

I asked why, and Williams said because in Germany everything was *Verboten*. The German Empire was one vast Central Park and the German people spent most of their time trying to keep off the grass. You had to walk into a railway station by one door plainly marked Entrance and you had to go out by another door plainly marked Exit and if anyone dared to cross the tracks—any foreigner that is; you couldn't imagine a native doing it—they sent a major-general and a regiment of infantry and arrested you and fined you three marks, which is about seventy-three cents in our money. Williams said that in Germany if you met an army officer you had to get off the sidewalk and if you were awkward about it

the officer drew his sword and ran you through. He said that all male Prussians waxed their mustaches like the Kaiser and walked about with a get-off-the-earth air that was offensive to any true democrat. In Germany if you wrote a letter you had to write on the envelope "Mr. Doctor the Honorable Member of the Higher Street-Flushing Council Schmidt," and if you omitted the period after Mr. you were challenged to a duel. Williams said that because of all those things he had never had the slightest temptation to visit Germany, though he would very much like to see England and Paris.

I suggested that possibly if he overcame his scruples and visited Berlin he might learn to see things differently. The Germans might be a bit stiff perhaps. But all the faults he had mentioned had their good side. The Germans were a disciplined, orderly, loyal people, and it was because they knew how to take orders that they had accomplished such great things in science, in scholarship, in industry, in commerce.

Williams said "Rot!" Perhaps he used another word—at this moment the train was pulling up at Broad Channel and the rasp of the brake made it difficult to hear. He said what did it matter if the Germans did all I had mentioned if it all

had to be done under drill-masters. He believed in a man doing things after his own way—individual liberty, you know. He liked the Allies—English, French, Russians—because they weren't up to the Sunday-school standard. They were human. And how about little Belgium. Wasn't it a wonderful stand she had made against the Kaiser?

He pulled my pencil from his pocket and immediately convened a European Congress and began cutting up the map of Europe just above the weather forecast. Within five minutes Poland had reawakened from her degradation of one hundred and fifty years and was ruling over two hundred thousand square miles of territory. On Williams's map the new Poland rather interfered with the new Belgium which in turn came dangerously close to running into Spain. The Rhine gave him a good deal of trouble, but by rubbing assiduously with his eraser he managed to change its course so that it harmonized with the various new boundaries. Whenever the Rhine came into collision with an especially desirable piece of territory for Belgium or France he curled the Rhine around it. He then proceeded to dismember Austria-Hungary and encountered some difficulty in distributing the pieces. At first he gave most

of them to Russia, but that made the latter too big on the map, so he rubbed out part of the Czar's empire and gave it to Servia and Roumania.

He was rounding out the new boundaries of Germany when we reached my station. My impression is that Germany lost several thousand square miles of territory and five million inhabitants. I lost my pencil.

VII

SCHOOL

ILLNESS broke in upon the beginning of Harold's academic career. He did not get fairly under way until he was seven years and over. That was not so long ago but that we can easily recall the warm flush of pride with which we received formal notification that our son Harold had passed his Entrance Examinations for the Second Grade and was now qualified to take up the reading of ordinary numerals to 1000 and Roman numerals to XX, with addition through 9's, and the multiplication table to 5×9 , not to mention objective work in simple fractions and problems. The notion of Harold's "entrance examinations" amused Emmeline intensely. At least she took occasion during the next two weeks to read the certificate out aloud to visitors, laughing almost spontaneously. But when visitors were not about she would sometimes pull out the printed card and look at it thoughtfully, still smiling, but with no evident signs of hilarity. She said that morn-

ings, after nine, it was very quiet in the house nowadays. It was delightful but strange.

If school brought any spiritual crisis to Harold he gave no sign of it. An extraordinary calm in the face of exceptional circumstances is one of the traits I envy him. Possibly this may be because nobody or nothing that presents itself to him from the outside can ever approach in interest the things that are going on inside of him. He will be shy before strangers, but I am inclined to think that the Dalai Lama of Tibet would leave him unruffled. Kings and Emperors have a logical place in Harold's world of ideas, whereas an ordinary visitor in the house needs to have his presence explained.

Harold's self-possession was shown in the manner he conducted himself during his entrance examinations. The questions were oral. He had just been asked to name the days of the week when he observed that one of his shoe-laces had come loose. He stooped, adjusted his shoe-lace, and gave the days of the week correctly. The operation on his shoe was not completed when he was asked how much is three and four. He solved the problem while still in a semicircular position. When Emmeline heard of his behavior during the test she was in despair. She foresaw

the blasting of Harold's educational career at the very start. She was of a mind to call up the school authorities and let them know that the boy did not usually answer questions from the vicinity of his shoe tops, and that probably it was nervousness. But the school authorities evidently knew better. They must have discerned in Harold an equanimity of the soul, a Spartan calm, which it is one of the main purposes of pedagogy to develop.

Harold's self-possession is never more conspicuous than during the two hours that intervene between his getting out of bed and his departure for school. The flight of time does not exist for him. He goes about his toilet with exquisite deliberation. If anything, he dresses and washes with greater leisureliness from Monday to Friday than he does the other two days of the week. It is not an aversion for learning. It is not even indifference. Harold does not creep to school. He goes cheerfully when we tell him that he is ready to go. But while the business of getting him ready is under way he views the process objectively. It is as if some strange little boy were being washed and combed and urged through his breakfast until the moment when everything being done, the spirit of himself, Harold, enters

that alien body and propels it to school. As sailing-master of his soul it is not for him to bother with loading the cargo and battening down the hatches. Only when the hawsers are ready to be cast off—it is ten minutes of nine and Emmeline's nerves are on edge—does the master ascend the bridge. Once outside the door he makes excellent speed. I have warned Harold repeatedly, but he always trots instead of walking, and his manner of crossing the avenue gives us some anxiety on account of the cars and automobiles.

Sometimes I think that Emmeline and I assume the wrong attitude toward Harold's deliberate ways between seven and nine in the morning. In our behalf it must be said, of course, that getting a boy washed and dressed and fed with only two hours to do it in is a task that calls for expedition. But in our anxiety to get Harold off to school in time we are sometimes tempted to overlook the boy's extraordinary spiritual activity during these two hours. It is then that the events of the preceding day pass in swift procession through his mind. At table the night before Harold has been silent as usual and apparently indifferent to the conversation. As it turns out, my remarks on the European situation have been caught and registered for fuller investigation. At

the dinner-table he is too busy balancing the books of his own daily concerns. In the morning he is a bottomless vessel of curiosity. In the morning, while brushing his teeth or over his egg cup, he will demand a detailed statement of the causes behind the great upheaval on the Continent. A stranger watching Harold in the act of pulling on his stockings might suppose that the boy is imperfectly awake. But I know that his stockings get tangled up because he is pondering on the character and motives of William II and other problems which must be immediately referred to me who am busy before the shaving mirror.

On such occasions I confess that I frequently dispose of the European situation with a display of summary authority which President Wilson would never tolerate in a Mexican dictator. Or else I describe the Kaiser in a few ill-chosen and inadequate phrases such as naturally suggest themselves to one in a hurry before the shaving mirror. Later I feel that we are unjust to the boy and neglectful of the educational opportunities he affords us. If the secret of pedagogy is to find the moment when the child's mind is in its most receptive state, and feed it with the information which, at other times, involves effort to absorb, it seems a pity that at 7.30 in the morn-

ing I should be busy with my razor. I have seldom encountered a human being so eager to be instructed as Harold is at twenty minutes of nine with his glass of milk still before him. Some day an educational reformer will cut the ground from under the Froebelians and Tolstoyans and Montessorians by devising a system of bedroom and bathroom and breakfast-table education. Under such a system all the instructor would have to do would be to follow the child about while he is getting ready for school and answer questions. Fifteen minutes with Harold while he is lacing his shoes would give his instructor enough mental spontaneity and spiritual thirst to equip an entire classroom.

Our knowledge of what happens to Harold at school between the hours of nine and one is fragmentary. From the school syllabus we learn, of course, that besides being engaged upon the art of reading numbers up to 1000 and Roman numerals to XX supplemented by the multiplication table as far as 5×9 , Harold is being instructed in English Literature, in Language, in History beginning with Early Life on Manhattan, in Nature Study, in the Industrial and the Fine Arts, in Music and Physical Training. We have, too, occasional reports from the schoolroom regarding

Harold's backwardness in concentration and penmanship, as opposed to his proficiency in Language and History. Then there are the mothers' meetings. But such information is either too theoretical or too specific. Of the boy's mental growth in the round we have no way of judging except as he reveals himself spontaneously.

And Harold reveals very little indeed. His school life falls from his shoulders the moment he steps out into the street. If there were no syllabuses, mothers' meetings, and occasional reports, and we were left to find out the nature of Harold's curriculum from what he offers to tell, our ideas would be even more fragmentary than they are. What we are compelled to do is to piece together stray remarks at table or while the boy is dressing or undressing, laconic bulletins delivered with no particular relevance, or else if relevant, uttered in a matter-of-fact tone, as having no very intimate relation to himself, much as I should throw out an item from the evening paper to fill out a blank in conversation. Only thus did I find out that Harold models in clay, that he sews his own Indian suit for the Commencement pageant, that he does practical gardening and folk dancing. I am not sure about basket-work and elementary wood-carving. We know that he

writes because there has been some complaint about his lack of neatness, which his teacher is inclined to explain as arising from the broader defect of inadequate attention.

You must not suppose that Harold is an indifferent scholar in the sense of being a poor student or devoid of the sense of duty. Of his ambition I am not so sure. The fact remains that he passed his entrance examinations easily and that at the end of the year, in spite of a month's absence on account of measles, he was promoted into Grade 3. Harold is indifferent to the extent that he does not bring his school away with him as I bring my own work home with me, to worry over. Harold's reticence is partly due to his highly developed sense of the sanctity and sufficiency of his private thoughts. Partly it is due to the capacity of every child to live in the moment and let it drop from him when he passes on to the next interest, whether it be from school to lunch, or from lunch to play, or from play to supper. But on the whole I consider Harold's lack of conversation about school as in the highest sense a tribute to the efficiency of his teachers and as evidence that he is happy with them. School has fitted so well into his scheme of life, has been accepted by him as so much a matter of course, that he no more thinks it neces-

sary to refer to school than he would to the fact that he has enjoyed his supper.

In conversation at table Harold's teacher will come up quite frequently. This shows that she is a factor in his life. The mention of Harold's teacher will sometimes irritate Emmeline because the boy is in the habit of citing teacher as an authority on elementary truths that Emmeline has been at much pains to inculcate. By way of nothing in particular—Harold's disclosures of his school life are nearly always by way of nothing in particular—he will declare that his teacher said that to bolt food without chewing is bad for the digestion. Inasmuch as Emmeline has devoted several years to training Harold in that important physiological principle, she is rather vexed that a single statement by teacher should have assumed an authority which prolonged instruction on her own part has failed to attain. Or there will be a somewhat harassing dispute as to whether it is time for Harold to go to bed. The next morning while pulling on his stockings Harold will declare—incidentally Harold is always in a mood, the morning after, to confess that he was in the wrong the night before—that his teacher said that boys who did not sleep enough had something happen to their chests and shoulders which pre-

vented them from playing football when they grew up. I do not mean to say that teacher's word will count as against Emmeline's. But it hurts to have the boy look outside for sanctions to a code of behavior in which he has been drilled at home. I imagine it is in such moments Emmeline feels the first pangs of a child's ingratitude. But it is a trait that has value and significance. When Harold, who has been drinking milk with his meals since infancy, observes that his teacher said that milk is good for children, it occurs to me that he is only experiencing that need of an external prop for useful habits which is at the basis of religion.

Not that there is in Harold's attitude to his teacher anything of religious awe. She is simply the exponent of the laws of his environment, laws which the boy knows cannot be violated as so many of the laws enunciated at home, which are subject to suspension and modification. To every child, I imagine, school is the place where the rule prevails and home is the place where exceptions to the rule may be safely invoked. Here is the fallacy in so much modern speculation on parents and teachers which would confound the functions of the home and the school by injecting the rule of affection into the school and the rule of discipline into the home. If the home is to remain a little isle of

peace for its members I fail to see why Harold should be less entitled than myself to invoke its asylum. If I find in the home a refuge against the hard competitive conditions of my business life, Harold should rightly find in the home a refuge against the fairly rigid rules without which school is inconceivable. I disagree with the prevalent theory in not at all being sure that women who are mothers make the best teachers. And I am not sure that women who have taught children in class make the best mothers. In the externals of method and discipline they may have the advantage. But it is absurd to suppose that the principles which guide a woman in charge of the little community of the classroom are the relations which should subsist between the mother and the handful of children of her own body.

An exceedingly complex subject this question of the freedom of the child. I am not sure that I understand it. Neither am I sure that the militant advocates of the freedom of the child understand it. At any rate, in so many arguments on the rights of the child, I find a lurking argument for the rights of parents as against the child. The great implication seems to be that the modern way for a mother to love her children is to have the teacher love them for her. The modern way to

train the child is to deny him the indulgences which the child, as the victim of several tens of thousands of years of foolish practice, has learned to expect from his parents. The freedom of the child seems to demand that he shall not bother his parents. There must be discipline in the matter of a child's sitting up after supper to wait for father from the office. But he must be allowed the utmost freedom in learning to read numbers up to 1000 and Roman numerals to XX. No fetters must be imposed upon Harold's personality when he is studying the date of the discovery of America, but there are rigorous limitations on the number of minutes he is to frolic with me in bed or to interrupt me at the typewriter when I am engaged in rapping out copy that the world could spare much more easily than Harold's soul can spare a half hour of communion with me.

Am I wrong in thinking of the reorganized child life *à la* Bernard Shaw as a scheme under which the schoolboy with shining face creeps unwillingly home and little girls do samplers saying "God bless our School"? Home—a phalanstery of individuals, mature and immature, with sharply defined rules against mutual intrusion. School—a place with no rules of conduct save those working secretly, an anarchy saved from chaos by a con-

cealed benevolent despotism *à la* Montessori. The advanced child culturists puzzle me. In life they simply adore self-assertion in the face of adverse circumstances. In life they believe that character-building is attained by knocking one's head against environment, and love for liberty is nourished only under despotism. Why not apply the same logic to the child in school? What sort of mental and moral fiber is developed by having the child in conflict with nothing in particular? How can anyone, child or adult, revolt against the mush of the super-Froebelian, super-Montessorian methods of pedagogical non-resistance?

I should be more vehement against the complicated and expensive machinery of Montessorians and other superpedagogues if I thought their methods really as efficacious as people would have me believe. I should then protest against the refinements of an educational system which is within the reach only of the privileged few. I am enough of a demagogue to grow angry at the thought of all those beautifully balanced systems of pedagogy, of education by music and the dance and rhythmic physical development which demand elaborate plants, expensive teachers, and a leisureliness which the State and the city can never supply to the children of the masses. If I were a revolu-

tionist of the sanguine type I should be content to make education difficult and expensive and then insist that all children have it. But I am not a revolutionary optimist, and until the modern State is prepared to spend on its schools fifty times as much as it does to-day, I resent the tendency toward a double system of education, one of joyous and harmonic development for the children of the rich and one of mechanical routine and hard practicality for the other nine children out of ten.

That is, I don't resent it. What I mean is that I should resent it if the efficacy of the costly modern systems were really superior to the ready-made store-clothes education offered to the children of the democracy. The expensive educational systems are not a cause but an effect. Any system adopted by the rich for the education of their children will result in the bringing up of sanguine, self-assertive, harmoniously developed thoroughbreds. As between the graduate of the Eurythmic schools of Jacques Dalcroze and the graduate of Public School number 55, Manhattan, I admit that the Eurythmic child will come much nearer to the Hellenic ideal of free-stepping, graceful, masterful individuality. But it is not Montessori and Dalcroze that make the child of the income-tax-paying classes a Superchild. It

is the habit of paying income tax that produces Superchildren. The mediæval methods of Eton and Harrow have been turning out precisely the ideal product in the shape of the English gentleman if poise, a rich appetite, and the assumption of one's own supreme worth are what you are striving for.

I am enough of a demagogue to have been rather cast down when it was decided to send Harold to a private school. There were reasons enough. The boy's health, upon experiment, was not equal to the strain of a school day from nine till three in the afternoon (actually Harold's school day began at eight in the morning because of the part-time system enforced by the overcrowding of the classes, which Montessori will have to take into consideration). Harold's day now is from nine o'clock till one, with a brief recess for play and an intermission for lunch if desired. And a schedule which includes physical training, nature study, clay modeling, basket weaving, and pageant rehearsals seems in no danger of overtaxing the child's mind. (Once more I fall victim to my antiquated prejudices, when I imply that modeling in clay and sewing Indian costumes do not involve a strain on the mind. I know that the newer psychology and the

newer pedagogy have shown that there is more cerebration involved in cutting out paper patterns than in memorizing the multiplication table. But I am a slave to the old vocabulary. The reader forewarned will make the proper deductions.)

Nevertheless I did feel a pang at separating Harold from the public school. Emmeline laughed and asked whether I was afraid that Harold would turn out a snob. Perhaps I was a bit afraid of that, but at bottom it was not fear that Harold would go to the bad in his private school, but that he would do very well there. In other words, it was the feeling I have just expressed, whether it was fair that Harold should be put into the way of having a very delightful time at school, with easy hours under splendid hygienic conditions and work reduced largely to play, while so many of the boys he plays with cannot afford these advantages. That is, not advantages. As I have said, Harold will probably get no more out of his small carefully-guarded classes than the other children will get out of the overcrowded classes in the public school. But as a sign of social inequality the thing offended me. If you will, you may call this a gospel of envy. But in my heart I could not help taking sides with the children of the disin-

herited against Harold as a representative of the exploiting classes.

As to the fear of Harold's turning into a snob, that has long been shown to be completely unfounded. On this subject Harold's itinerary from his school to his home is illuminating evidence. I have said that in the morning Harold trots to school. In the morning Harold probably gets to school in five minutes. Returning it takes him half an hour. Emmeline has questioned him on the subject. It appears that in returning from school Harold maps a course due north by west by east by south so as to cover every local bit of topography that comes within his knowledge during the play hours of the afternoon. He tacks around unnecessary corners. He beats his way up a hill in the park which is a favorite tourney-place for the marble players of the vicinity. He skirts the shore of several window displays to the contents of which he has turned the conversation at home on several occasions. For five minutes at a time he is totally becalmed against some smooth expanse of brick wall excellent for handball practice or on a sheltered corner for a bit of preliminary knuckle exercise with his agates and his "immies." The White Wing flushing the pavement engages Harold's attention for as long as

the work may seem to demand. Then, having assured himself that the world at 1.30 in the afternoon is very much as he left it at six o'clock the night before, he hastens to his lunch.

No, there is little danger of the boy's growing up an aristocrat. The fierce democracy of the Street has him in its grasp. He chooses his playmates by preference from the lower classes. He is like Walt Whitman in the way he singles out the dirtiest little boy in the block and says to him, "Camerado." He takes his fellow men as he finds them. When Harold was first sent off to school Emmeline was concerned to find a nice little boy for him to play with. She discovered one in a classmate of Harold's. We invited him to the house, and in half an hour a considerable portion of the wall paper in Harold's room was hanging in fringes. But in spite of a common basis of taste and temperament the two boys are not much together, for the very reason, I presume, that their friendship has been to some extent imposed on them from above. No; Harold's tastes go down straight to the foundations of our social structure. Without recognizing class-distinctions he would rather play marbles with the son of a retail tradesman than with the son of a college professor, and with the son of a janitor than with the son of a

storekeeper. If the janitor is a negro so much the better. The negro boys have the advantage over Harold in the matter of tint at the beginning of a game of marbles. But within half an hour Harold has overcome the handicap. If anything, his is the deeper shade of brown, though his color is not so evenly distributed. In such guise I can recognize Harold by a sort of instinct. But the only way a stranger could tell the child of Caucasian descent from the child of the Hamite would be by measuring Harold's cephalic index.

It is a serious problem—the gains of democracy and the price we must pay. There are obvious advantages: the boy's education in the sense of human fellowship without regard to caste and color; his education in the rough and ready but fairly equitable laws of the Street; his gain in self-confidence and self-restraint in play; not to mention the extremely beneficent effect on his appetite and his digestion. I have watched the boy at his marbles in the park, more eager, more drunken with the joy of existence than he is at school or in the house. I have seen him sprawl down on his knees and with the pad of his palm and four outstretched fingers measure off eight or ten horrible hand spaces in the dust from the hole to his opponent's marble. I have seen him rise

from the earth like Antæus, triumphant but horribly besmirched, with the blue of his eyes gleaming piratically through the circumjacent soil; I have watched him and rejoiced and had my qualms.

The price that Harold pays for democracy is in a slovenliness of speech which I find merely offensive but Emmeline finds utterly distracting. It seems a pity to have his school drill in phonetics and the memorizing of good literature vitiated by the slurred and clipped syllables of the streets. Harold says, "It is me," and frequently he says, "It is nuttin'." The final *g* of the participle has virtually disappeared from his vocabulary. He sometimes says, "I ain't got nuttin'." While Emmeline is distracted I am merely offended, because I recall that there is a great body of linguistic authority growing up in favor of Harold's democratic practices in phonetics and grammar. When Harold says, "It is me," Professor Lounsbury should worry. By the time Harold grows up it will probably be good grammar to say, "I ain't got nothing." By the time Harold grows up the Decalogue, in its latent recension, will read, "Thou shalt not have none other gods before I," and "Thou shalt not bear no false witness against none of thy neighbors." I must not forget that whereas I have been brought up on Matthew

Arnold, De Quincey, and Stevenson, Harold is growing up in the age of John Masefield. If the greatest literature and the foremost language is to be racy of the soil—and for that matter not only our speech and our literature, but if our morals and our social outlook are to be racy of the soil—if in every section of life the cry is back to the land, to the primitive, to the unashamed, sex-education, untrammelled art, democracy at its broadest, if—well, what I mean is that in any civilization based upon close contact with the soil, Harold will not be lost. Soil is right in his line.

I am less concerned with the effect of the street upon Harold's vernacular because the boy seems gratefully immune against the more sordid aspects of the open-air life. His phonetics and his grammar are deteriorating, but there is no trace of foulness in his speech and in his thoughts. The reason is that Harold's open-air activities are confined entirely to play. His democracy centers about the ball ground and the marble pit. His absorption in games is so complete—too complete, to judge by the nervous exhaustion it sometimes brings—that it leaves no leisure or inclination for idle speech. His technical vocabulary of games is comprehensive. I sometimes marvel at the ease with which he has mastered the *patois* of sport—

those cabalistic words which, shouted at the proper moment, signify that Harold prefers to let his marble rest and have his opponent shoot at him or that he has chosen to mark off so many hand spaces in the dirt and shoot at his opponent. But once the game is done he comes upstairs. He does not share in the spiritual life of the gang and he knows absolutely nothing of the premature intimacies of street childhood with the bitterness of life. On the whole I find the balance is in favor of marbles and democracy.

Harold in the open air is an exceedingly important factor and a badly neglected one in present-day discussion of the child. The talk is either of the school or the home. If play is taken into account it is the regulated play of the school ground. Yet the Street is the citadel of the liberties of the child. Take the actual question of hours in Harold's day. He spends nearly twelve hours in bed, from seven to seven. He spends two hours, almost, at his meals. He spends four hours at school. He spends five hours at least in play. Under such an arrangement all talk about the despotism of school and the despotism of parents loses meaning to me. I have shown that the boy's school life is happy. But even if it were not, even if his body and soul were subjected to the tyran-

nies the sentimental revolutionist is so fond of calling up, those twelve hours of sleep and five hours of play are a reservoir of physical and spiritual recuperation which would make life more than tolerable to Harold. On the whole I think I am not less sensitive than Harold to pain and oppression. But if my employer were to let me sleep twelve hours in the twenty-four and play five hours and spend two hours at table, I should consider myself a very happy man.

I have reserved my confession for the very last. I find it difficult to take school at Harold's age—or for that matter at any age—seriously enough to grow extremely agitated over its problems. Montessori or Dr. Birch—the difference is not vast. Naturally I do not go as far as Mr. Squeers. School is just a ripple on the surface of the ocean of young life and feeling, and whether the ripple shapes after the Froebel pattern or the Montessori wrinkle makes little difference to the depths below. I can make the assertion with confidence about Harold without any very precise knowledge of what are the depths in him.

VIII

HAROLD AND THE UNIVERSE

THERE are anxious days in Belshazzar Court when the spirit of meekness and self-sacrifice descends upon Harold. The change usually comes on without warning, though by watching very closely we can detect the insidious approach of Harold's goodness. He will come up from his marbles or ball game a bit earlier than usual and put away his tools with a gentle air of disenchantment. Like Ecclesiastes, Byron, and Gabriele D'Annunzio, he has found the emptiness of pleasure and he makes a voluntary offer of his entire stock of agates to the baby, which reminds me of King Lear. At table he will emerge completely out of the world of private concerns in which he customarily dwells and ask how cannon are made and what is the immediate outlook for Home Rule. But more frequently his days of calm will follow upon a night of wrack and storm, which leaves every member of the family exhausted. The exact course of Harold's moods is still to be put on the map.

At any rate, soon after six in the morning, when the orchestral chorus of Belshazzar Court is tuning up with a click of water-pipes, the whirl of coffee-grinders, and muffled explosions from the gas-range turned on in full force by sleepy-eyed maids, we grow aware of a saintly presence in Harold's room. Someone is moving about gently with evident concern for those of us still in bed. Doors open with the same discreet caution. Softened footsteps pad along the hallway, and there is a gentlemanly splashing in the bathroom. Investigation discloses that it is a quarter of seven and Harold in an arm-chair before the window reading his *Arabian Nights*. He is washed, dressed, combed, and brushed. The problems of the toilet, the choice of a suit for the day, the discovery of the one unlucky shoe which always gets lost—all these customary intricacies have been solved, swiftly, surely, and with an economy of motion and noise that would delight the hearts of a congressional of scientific engineers.

Naturally we ask Harold whether he is not feeling well. He says that he is very well. But he says it in a tone of seraphic patience that leaves us unconvinced, and when Harold announces that it is his intention always to get up at this hour in the future and to dress without bothering his

mother, Emmeline calls him to her and feels his head. His forehead is cool. His tongue is red and moist. His eyes are clear. But just when Emmeline is ready to be reassured Harold asks whether the baby had been restless and hopes that she did not disturb our sleep in any way. Thereupon Emmeline feels his forehead once more and recalls that whenever he has been seriously ill the evil came on slowly.

Harold is thoughtful over his breakfast, but eats neither too fast nor too slowly, and with none of the minor accidents that sometimes mark his self-absorbed demeanor at table. Emmeline watches him, and Harold, knowing that he is watched, pretends not to notice. Emmeline recalls that this is the way people behave who are gravely afflicted. They pretend not only that they are not ill and are not anxious about themselves, but that they do not notice other people's anxiety about themselves. About half-past seven Harold gets up from the table and asks which coat is he to wear to school. Inasmuch as this is one hour and twenty minutes earlier than his usual time for departure, Emmeline shakes her head. She even makes a motion to feel Harold's brow again, but I protest that the constant friction is enough in itself to give the boy a temperature. So we tell the

boy that it is too early to go to school and he may play in his room. He says he is tired of play and he would prefer to practice his penmanship because he had been told that if his writing improved he would be moved up to the upper half of the class. "I like to write my words in the morning," he says. "I am going to do it every day." He works at his model sentences until Emmeline tells him that he has done enough and must now play awhile.

"Have I time?" he asks, and his voice is like St. Cecilia. It is heartrending, this fear of dreadful evil impending over Harold which one discerns but cannot localize. He insists on leaving for school twenty minutes too early. Before going he declares that he likes to go to school with his shoes nicely polished. He had polished them himself.

At night I find the atmosphere sultry with apprehension. The suspense begins to tell. Harold came home directly from school instead of following his usual roundabout course by which he covers three blocks in thirty-five minutes. At lunch he asked for stewed carrots. Harold detests stewed carrots, and there were none for lunch nor had there been any for several days in deference to his prejudices. He was disappointed to hear that there were no carrots, and he asked that he might have some to-morrow and every day thereafter.

Determined to break up this mood of painful beatitude, Emmeline asks whether he would like some ice cream for dessert. "Is ice cream good for me?" he asks, and nearly brings his mother to tears.

If only he would break something! But no. Harold, whose course about the house is so frequently strewn with chairs shoved out of place and things dropping from tables and book-shelves, moves about like Isadora Duncan, a graceful wraith among inviting corners and edges. After lunch, I am told, he pulled the heaviest accessible volume from the book-shelves, a book which he knew had no pictures in it, and he read several pages of *Clayhanger* with extraordinary concentration. He did not refuse to go out to play, and his apparent indifference was belied by the fact that he did not reappear until late in the afternoon. There was a gleam of hope in that, and Emmeline was further encouraged when he came upstairs in about his customary condition of bemirchment; we seemed to be seeing light.

Harold was in his room making ready for bed while we at table wondered what it all meant. Suddenly there was the sound of a crash followed by a yell. Emmeline raised her head and a look of ineffable relief came into her face. The yell

emanated from the baby. She yelled again and then Harold shouted. They alternated for some time and then fell into a duet of indignant clamor. I went to study the situation on the spot. I found that just as he had taken off one shoe and was busy with the other something had happened to Harold's soul which impelled him to get out of bed and run out into the hall and overturn the baby's doll carriage with its precious burden. He had then taken the doll and thrown it under the bed and was making a pretense of climbing into the doll carriage. It took some time to disentangle the two, but we did it with glad hearts. Harold was himself again.

I am convinced that he has a sense of humor. It does not consist in saying the bright things which are funny to us but quite serious to the child who utters them. To the extent that children are consciously humorous they are so in action rather than in speech. And even in action it is hard to tell how much is humor and how much is mischief which accidentally takes on an amusing aspect. An example of this kind would be the disposition Harold once made of his garters for several nights running. Switching on the light in his room one night, when the boy was fast

asleep, I discovered his garters neatly strung over the chandelier. Even by standing on his bed Harold could not reach the chandelier. The feat therefore must have required some very deft angling and a degree of patience that I never thought was in the boy. I suppose Harold's garters on the gas bracket would be humor to Professor Bergson, since the incongruity of the result must have been present to the boy's mind. Yet the impelling motive was mischief.

But Harold was without question a self-conscious humorist when I found him one night in bed supposedly trying to go to sleep. He had taken a piece of wrapping cord and tied one end to his left thumb and the other end to the bedstead. When I asked what it all meant he said it was to keep himself from falling out of bed. Is it paternal pride in me which makes me discern a master's touch in that episode? At any rate, there was here a calculated effect upon a possible audience. He had been lying there in the dark and chuckled and waited for someone to come in.

It is no argument against Harold as a humorist that he is also a good deal of a baby. Whatever may be the case with your epigrammatic wits and their penny stock of worldly disenchantment, true humor comes out of an inextinguishable innocence

of the heart. Mark Twain had it and Mr. Dooley has it and Swift had it, and I believe that Harold has it. Only the innocent heart can pass quickly from laughter to tears; laughter which means a child-like contentment with the goodness of the world, and tears which mean profound discouragement with the badness of the world, instead of the thin-lipped wit which is based on the conviction that there is no good and no bad—unless the good is bad and the bad good—and that it doesn't matter anyway. But though I have my theory pat on the subject, I find it always a shock to think that a humorist capable of a masterpiece like tying himself into bed with a wrapping string should occasionally be discovered at play in a corner with furnishings from the wardrobe of his sister's doll. Not frequently, in justice to Harold, but it happens.

Nor is it against Harold's sense of humor that he will often laugh without occasion but because of his mere capacity for laughter. Harold's experience with the Home Page in the afternoon newspaper is illuminating on this point. The Home Page, as is well known, is equally divided between comic pictures and text and serious aids to house-keeping, a division at that time unknown to Harold, who was interested only in the comics. These pic-

tures he had got me into the habit of expounding to him, and since the artist knew his audience, Harold laughed in the proper places. However, it happened one day that Harold, not having had enough of the comic pictures, insisted that I read to him the printed text in small type distributed between the pictures. I read all the jokes, and he was not yet satisfied. So I went on and read the Household Hints to him—how young potatoes should be kept in a small flat, and how linen handkerchiefs should be ironed, and what will relieve rheumatism of the arm-joints; and when I mentioned new potatoes or linen or rheumatism of the arm-joints Harold held his sides and shrieked. Evidently this could have happened only to the innocent soul laden to the bursting point with laughter and waiting for the prick of the magic word like potatoes or linen handkerchief or rheumatism to release the flood.

He has his dark moods. They come on as suddenly as his attacks of goodness. There is the mood of destruction. Not that Harold is continent at best. He consumes clothes, books, toys with a swiftness which may be the sign of an enviable capacity for living in the moment only. Who knows? As modern parents it would be pre-

sumptuous in us to attempt to impose our own standards of orderliness and routine upon the boy. But the moods of destruction to which I refer are Harold's ordinary state raised to the *n*th power. On such a day his path is through wreckage. Things break, tear, rip, slice, and crumble to pieces under his fingers. His own body does not escape. It is a day of falls, cuts, bruises, a general *malaise*, which expresses itself in frequent tears; and when he is not crying he is on the edge of whimpering. The moral law and the law of gravitation seem to be simultaneously repealed for him. Objects that ought to remain suspended on the wall precipitate themselves to the floor. Objects like chairs and footstools which properly belong on the floor turn somersaults, mount upon the beds, clamber over each other. Harold is by turns spiteful, sullen, boisterous, unhappy, and as a rule, bandaged. These are days when all the woe of the world seems to have descended upon his shoulders.

I have often wondered why educators and reformers who are so concerned for the freedom of the child will deny the child's right to such occasional moods of sullen rebellion. For ourselves, grown-up men and women, we are very ready to claim the slightest excuse for anti-social behavior.

A touch of indigestion will serve a man as sufficient reason for coming down to the office with a scowl and barking all morning at his subordinates. And the victims of his temper also think the reason sufficient: the poor fellow probably ate unwisely last night after the theater. The dyspeptic touch will cause a man to douse himself in oceans of self-pity as if any reason on earth existed why he should wreak himself on welsh rarebits at midnight.

Whereas the child? With full knowledge of the delicate nature of his physiological machinery we yet deny that any mechanical dislocation is sufficient excuse for his making other people uncomfortable. Up to the age of four or five the right to be fretful after loss of sleep is probably recognized by most parents. But between five and twelve, say, the presumption is that a boy must either be under the doctor's care or else in perfect health. The intervening stages of discomfort, fatigue, nervous strain, are overlooked. Sullenness, that most disagreeable of qualities in a child, can easily be traced to a physiological basis, and one much less reprehensible than the midnight rarebit of the adult or the wild debauches of shopping and dress-fitting that lead to headaches. But whereas strong men can go down to the office and

growl and women can retire to their rooms with a handkerchief around the head, the child is denied the privilege of seeking the seclusion which he needs. If like a young animal he looks for a corner in which to suck his wounded paw, we call it sullenness and insist that he remain in our society and find it agreeable. The right of the child to be out-of-sorts occasionally is one of the privileges which must be inscribed in any charter of freedom that the Century of the Child is to draw up for him.

But if Harold is destructive he is not blood-thirsty. In this respect I believe he is an exceptional child. He is warlike, but a love of gore for its own sake does not possess him. He will arm himself with a crusader's dirk made of a lead pencil and a clothespin and inflict gaping wounds on the mattress and the pillow, but I have never heard him ask for buckets of blood to drink as other children will do. In stories of Christian martyrs and the lions I do not recall that he has taken sides with the lions. He is happy to shoot down countless enemies—represented by ninepins or perhaps his sister's dolls—with an improvised rifle, but he does not go to the extreme of mutilating his enemies and parading their reeking heads upon the point of the sword like other boys of his age I

know. The sight of his own life's fluid stirs him to inexpressible outcries of anguish and imaginary pain. I recall one visit to the dentist, a grim and prolonged engagement in which Harold lost a tooth and the dentist nearly lost his reason. That entire afternoon, after he was quite well, the boy would apply his handkerchief to his mouth every ten minutes and, detecting an imaginary red spot, he would howl like someone in Dante.

Actual pain he bears very well. If he cries when he is ill, it is largely out of self-pity. Properly approached he will submit to painful ministrations with very little outcry. The proper way to approach him is to argue. Direct bribery is of no avail. In fact, the mention of nice things he may have when he gets well only stirs him to clamor at the thought of what he is losing in the immediate present. But he will listen to reason, provided reason, like other medicaments, is applied with infinite patience. He must have time to think your proposition over. Given time, he will brace himself to his duty. When the episode is over, he is irradiated with a glow of self-appreciation that cheers us all up. He will compliment Emmeline on her surgical skill; he will remark that he expected the operation to be much more complicated than he found it to be; he may even offer to have

it done all over again, an offer which we receive in the spirit in which it is submitted, as an evidence of good will rather than as a practical issue.

In writing of Harold I find myself continually returning to the one trait so predominant in the boy as almost to constitute, for us, his personality. And yet I dare say he is not unlike other children in that respect. I refer to his self-contained spiritual life, to the secret fountain of his thoughts into which he will grant us only a glimpse, and that involuntarily. The educational sociologues confound hypocrisy with honest reticence when they insist that the child shall be a sort of infantile George Moore with his heart and whatever else is inside him on his sleeve. It is one thing for Harold to hold back some confession of misdeeds, to refuse an answer to a direct question bearing on a practical problem of mutual concern. It is quite another thing that he does not consider the secret processes of his soul as material for general conversation. He has, of course, his periods of garrulity; at bedtime, for instance, when he will rack his brain for topics to postpone the turning down of the light and the closed door. On such occasions when invented matter fails him he will take up in desperation some subject that is really close to his heart; but rarely at any other time.

It is an error to suppose that children take pleasure in asking unanswerable questions; at least children of Harold's age. They have delicacy. Harold may be insistent in putting questions which are difficult simply because the matter is hard to explain, but he is aware that there are other topics which we do not want to talk about, and these he will avoid to spare our susceptibilities, or else approach them with circumspection. The mystery of death, for instance, is a subject that fascinates the mind of every child. But Harold, having encountered extreme reluctance on our part to discuss the matter with him, will display the most extraordinary ingenuity in bending conversation in that direction, always framing his questions so as to leave the initiative to us. I am afraid that the crabbed piece-meal information we offer him gives him a rather contemptuous opinion at times of our courage or our intelligence. His own impressions of the great mystery I suspect are not far from the truth, but whenever I try to find out he will turn the subject. Partly this is because of a general reluctance to frame his creed upon demand, but partly also it is his desire to spare us the embarrassment of fibbing.

Harold's economy in putting questions is a thing for which I am profoundly grateful. It

spares me the hypocrisy of saying, "I don't know" on matters of which I do know something but consider to be outside the sphere of Harold's legitimate concern. It spares me the ignominy of inventing cocksure answers on subjects of a harmless nature, but on which I am unfortunately ignorant. But difficulties will arise. In the field of natural history, for example, I think I know something of general principles. I think I could give a fair account of the difference between Darwinism and Weismanism. I think I know what the mutation theory of De Vries means. By refreshing my memory in the encyclopædia I could sum up the Mendelian hypothesis without getting more than half the specific facts wrong. But unfortunately Harold is not interested in the difference between Darwin and Lamarck, but in the difference between an apple tree and a maple. There he is better informed than I, and it has often been his lot to instruct me. He offers his information in gentlemanly fashion, without a trace of pedantry. On the whole I think that as between the things Harold asks me and the things he tells me the balance is in favor of the latter.

Harold's views upon me are perfectly natural: that is, they are extremely complex. I am a be-

nevolent power, but not an omnipotent power. I am the power that promises circuses and generous quantities of confectionery, only to have my circuses countermanded and my candy estimates radically revised downward by a higher power that works for the ultimate best interests of Harold; it is spelled Emmeline. But if the boy is thus brought to recognize the limitations on my authority, this applies only within the home and in matters concerning his own welfare. With regard to Harold, I am a sort of inferior deity who is himself subject to the power of Necessity. But outside—in the vague universe included within the limits of the Office, to which I depart and from which I return like Apollo Helios into and out from the sea, except that I set in the morning and rise at night—I am to Harold a divinity of the first magnitude. It is his general impression that I write all the fourteen pages of the newspaper for which I am working; that in my outside time I write the high-class monthlies; that I have written the greater part of the books in my library, including the *Encyclopædia Britannica*; and that having written all these books, I have also printed them, bound them, and sold them at hundreds of dollars a copy.

Such being his earnest belief with regard to my

professional capacities, it is natural that when engaged in the most ancient children's game in the world, namely, the matching of fathers, Harold's fancy should give itself free rein. I presume it is the rudiments of that sentiment which we later describe as patriotism that impels Harold to claim for his father superhuman achievements in athletics and business. At that the boy has his limitations of conscience. There was one occasion when his friend Herbert asserted that his father once took an ordinary bamboo rod and caught a whale. It was a comfort to have Harold assume a skeptical attitude, and instead of declaring that *his* father once caught a fish as big as the Woolworth Building, content himself with impugning his opponent's veracity. Probably Harold's sense of humor here enters to apprise him that it is sufficient to have a father who can throw a baseball further than any man alive, lift heavier weights than Sandow, and earn \$1,000 an hour by writing the world's best literature, without claiming for him the impossible feat of catching a whale at the end of a bamboo pole.

How does Harold reconcile my character as a composite Rockefeller—Brickley—William Dean Howells with the fact that when I have promised

him a bar of chocolate after supper I have been sometimes forced to sit by silently and have my decision reversed with costs in an elaborate opinion by United States Supreme Court Justice Emmeline, nobody dissenting? If on such occasions the sense of frustrated desire does not embitter the boy overmuch, it may be that he will recognize my subjection to the above-mentioned law of Necessity, to which all must bend. Otherwise I suppose Harold regards me with a fair measure of contempt, possibly mixed with pity. Sometimes there is no trace of pity. Sometimes Harold behaves abominably. While Justice Emmeline's opinion with regard to the circus or the chocolate is being formulated, Harold will lend me a sneaking sort of moral support, eying me furtively and pulling the longest face at his disposal without daring to commit himself in words. But once the sentence of reversal is pronounced Harold knows where his bread is buttered. He flops shamefully to the winning side, and in his zeal to make his peace with the *de facto* powers, he turns on me in the most shameful manner, declaring that Father is always offering him things that are not good for him, that circuses are a bore anyhow, and that he would much rather wait till to-morrow and have a small bit of chocolate with

the assurance that it would do him good instead of harm. Yes he would, the traitor!

And yet the boy's conduct is natural. When the bitterness of his base desertion passes, I am the first to acknowledge the justice as well as the prudence of his course. I am a good enough imitation god for Harold's ordinary purposes, a Baal for moments of ease and prosperity and guilty dalliance. But when adversity falls, and the supreme test comes between Baal and the Jehovah of justice and righteous Necessity, he flies instinctively to the embrace of the Higher Power, which is Emmeline. He turns his back with decision on the circuses and the chocolates of the Gentiles and meekly confesses the authority of one in whose hands are the gifts that follow upon a sane worship of the Law. *Ex tenebris*—at midnight, when Harold wakes sometimes with sudden pain, or in the hush of the sickroom, or in the long twilight of convalescence when the passions run low and Harold is conscious only of his frail mortality, it is not upon me that Harold calls. At such moments I am like Baal and Odin and Jupiter Olympus when their moment comes. I am distinctly *de trop*. At such moments, with doctors and nurses in the house, and an air of general ineptitude oppressing me, what can I do but retire

to my own room and try to read Galsworthy in a thick Goetterdämmerung of tobacco smoke until Necessity, snatching a moment from the sickroom, insists that I put on my hat and go out for a walk?

As I think back over the random observations and memories I have here thrown together I feel that this paper demands an honester title than the one I set down at the beginning. Of course, "Harold and the Universe" is good for catch-penny purposes. But "Field Notes on Harold" would have been the truer heading. There is little here of that fine consecutiveness and subtlety which you find in modern theories about the child; but so many of these theories are untrue. There is this element of unity in my remarks that they are intended to convey an impression of this complex thing called the Child which is now being reduced to such easy formulas—formulas which in the name of a higher freedom for the child threaten the true freedom of the child with our rough groping invasions into his spontaneous soul life. Or else they set up a child of straw, describing him as a victim of despotism which is not so, as a slave to futile standards which is not so, as a neglected, pitiful creature, which is not so. Exag-

generation, which lies at the basis of every enthusiasm, has exaggerated out of our common talk the old, true notion of the child as an inexhaustible source of freedom and happiness, as a being who stands in no need of charters of rights and declarations of independence, because these are rights which we cannot alienate, however we try.

Who am I, to kick against the formula makers? In my description of Harold I might easily have revealed a greater degree of precise information and a firmer grasp on general principles. Harold is an enormous investment. He represents a vast capitalization of sacrifices, hopes, labors, fears, and doubts. And yet if you were to ask me to issue a prospectus on Harold, describing how soon and just how big the dividends will be on the capitalization, I could not tell you. On the basis of the preceding account I should have the greatest difficulty in listing Harold on the Stock Exchange, not to speak of having him designated as a legal investment for savings banks and insurance companies. Wild-cat speculator that I am, who am I to criticise the earnest men and women who would establish childhood on the sure basis of Standard Oil Subsidiaries and English Consols? But on this subject I prefer to be a gambler and take a chance.



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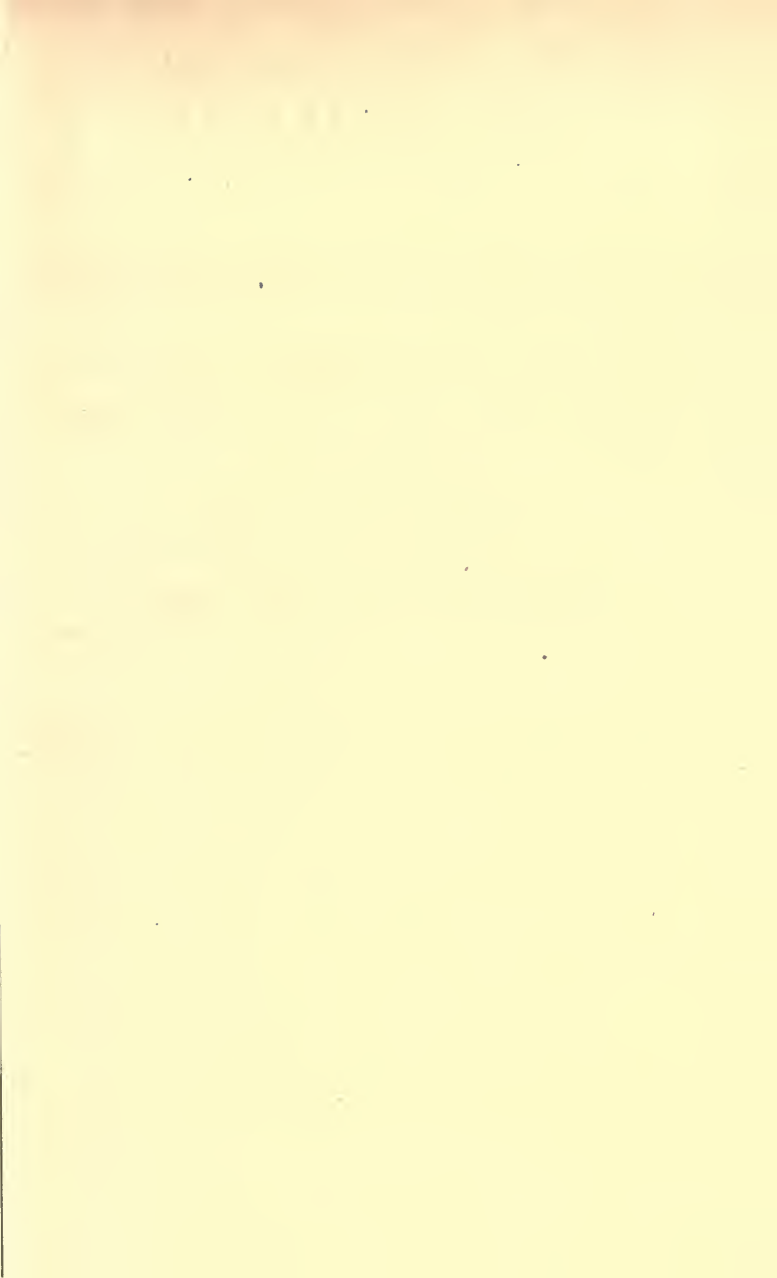
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